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THE HARVARD DRAMATIC CLUB
MIRACLE PLAYS

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THE
HARVARD DRAMATIC CLUB
MIRACLE PLAYS

*TEN PLAYS TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED
BY VARIOUS HANDS*

EDITED
WITH NOTES ON PRODUCTION
AND MUSIC BY
DONALD FAY ROBINSON

PREFACE BY
GEORGE PIERCE BAKER



SAMUEL FRENCH

Incorporated 1898

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PREFACE

The plays in this volume have been brought together to meet a demand. Increasingly all over this country the desire spreads, as a part of the recognition of the general significance of the Christmas season, to present some play informed with the Christmas spirit. Schools, community settlements, churches share in the demand. To find suitable plays has not been easy. A very few attempts by recent writers have done their work with the simplicity, sincerity, and beauty the spirit of the celebration demands. But most recent plays are too sophisticated or, even in the best sense, too theatrical. Something of the simple reverence the occasion requires is lacking. Consequently, again and again there has been recourse to medieval Christmas plays, English and Continental. Given originally at the high altars of the cathedrals and churches, they remained for centuries simple, genuinely emotional, and, except to our changed sense of the comic, genuinely reverential. Presented under the simplest conditions until they came out into the public squares and formed part of some cycle of plays, as at York or Chester, they grew slowly, naturally, in ready response to the emotional interest of their hearers. Their successive writers learned so to develop the original trope, or mere bit of action taken literally from the Bible, that the people concerned in the action became more than mere voices, were differentiated, and were shown in preceding or subsequent action desired by the audience. Story, then, developed from one incident, through the interest of the audience. Chosen dramatic illustration took on its permanent emphasis from the same

response of the audience. Realistic local portraits of minor Biblical types such as shepherds came gradually, in order that the historic story might seem more real to the eager hearers. Even the broad humor was simply the appearance in drama of the same grotesquerie which made the mediæval cathedral builders decorate the exquisite structures with hideous and, as it often seems to a modern observer, utterly irreverent gargoyles. The important point is that the plays, shaped through centuries to meet best the emotional response of the audience, always act far better than an inexperienced person would suppose, for they strike simply, directly, and with basic rightness at the emotions of any audience. Moreover, they were written to be acted by the unskilled, in the sense of people not professional actors. Therefore, the desired effects are not difficult. They are also easy to present because their settings were symbolic, calling strongly on the imagination of the public to see in the high altar of the church, by the aid of two or three properties, either the creche in which the Christ-child lay or the resurrection tomb of the risen Christ. Granted some fine Gothic doorway, as when many of the plays in this volume were revived in the Germanic Museum at Harvard University, granted the transept or choir of some church, or even a mere platform partly hung about with curtains, and these old miracle plays instantly fall into place, ready, if acted with any intelligence, to produce most of their original dramatic effect. No wonder that they have been much used, and that those which have been successful have been repeated again and again. No wonder that there has been an increasing demand for other miracle plays less accessible than those of the well-known English cycles such as York and Chester.

On the other hand, anyone who has had the experience of Mr. Robinson in producing such plays knows that three difficulties immediately appear. First, there are

words and passages which today cannot, because of changes in the language, be made clearly to convey their meaning. Thus, if essential, they must be paraphrased. Secondly, the old plays were allowed a prolixity which audiences will not endure in these days when the three act play has replaced the four and five act play, and has acquired a swiftness of technique to correspond with the turning of people from longhand and the stage coach to telegraphy and the airplane. The old plays must be helped by careful excisions to do in less space what they once did in more leisurely fashion. Much of Mr. Robinson's work consists of such editing. Connected with this is the necessity for cutting out certain references which undoubtedly for generations had significance, but which have become vague or of no meaning with the passage of the generations. And, finally, the grotesque and, as it seems to us, at times offensive humor must be so handled that whatever in it is essential is kept, but without present objectionableness. All these needs Mr. Robinson has tried to meet, and with results that vary from plays hardly more changed than to be a little cut, to plays in which excision, re-ordering, and paraphrasing make the results nearer adaptations than merely cut reprints. His purpose has been to maintain not so much accuracy of word or line, but accuracy of the total original impression.

Six of the plays here reprinted—English, French, German, and Spanish—have been given by the Harvard Dramatic Club. Four are, the editor believes, as yet unrevived. The basis of selection has been variety, both in nationality and in substance. With the helpful notes as to production provided by Mr. Robinson from his practical experience with the plays, they should be easy to give. Acted, they will show very interestingly different historical stages in the development of the miracle play, and the effect of national taste on the same or similar Biblical

material. As a group, they prove that with the passage of the centuries, though we may have gained in technical playwriting, it is hard for us today to regain in our would-be Christmas plays the artistic beauty which comes from a combination of simplicity, sincerity, and reverence in the treatment of the stories which, even today, keep Christmas and Easter times of particular emotional interest to mankind.

GEO. P. BAKER.

New Haven, Connecticut
February 25, 1928.

EDITOR'S NOTE

In the December of 1922, the Harvard Dramatic Club began what has now become an annual custom by producing a cut and adapted version of the *Pageant of the Shearmen and the Tailors* from Coventry. It was given in the Romanesque Hall of the Germanic Museum of Harvard University on Kirkland Street before an audience whose eligibility for admission was determined by whether or no they had paid for seats at the regular fall production of the Club a few days previous. John Mason Brown, then president of the Club, was the moving spirit of the enterprise, and it was he who adapted the play for the Club's use. The undertaking was received so favorably that another play was given the next year, one arranged from the Towneley Cycle by Randall Burrell. By 1924 the Harvard Dramatic Club Miracle Play had already become an institution. That year it was a French Play that was given, translated by the president of that year, Eduardo Sanchez, and directed by the then secretary of the Club, Lendon Snedeker. Inasmuch as it was only through the kindness of Professor Kuno Francke, Curator of the Germanic Museum, that they had been able to use an almost ideal place for their productions, the Club decided that the least they could do to show their appreciation would be to give a German play such as Professor Francke might suggest and wish for as its next attempt. So it fell to me as a student in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures to select and produce the next play, this time a German play, under the supervision of that most kind Curator.

This I did; and became thereby strongly interested in the Medieval Christmas play. It seemed that the Club was doing something of interest to far more people than even the best advertising could bring to the fall performances of the Club. Many churches and church schools were giving pageants and plays at Christmas, pageants and plays which for the most part had been evolved for the occasion. Why not put together a book of plays which should make the real old medieval productions available to all, adapted ready for modern use? This book is the answer to that question.

As a nucleus were used the four plays that had already been given; and an attempt has been made to round out the collection to a certain degree of representativeness. Selections and free translations have been made of examples from all the parts of Europe from which we now have plays of that group of medieval religious drama, with variety both of source and of type in view. And since it was for modern use that this was being done, there has seemed to be no reason for shrinking from altering the old plays to a greater or lesser degree that they might appeal more to a modern audience. This then has been the aim, to make a representative collection of medieval Christmas plays and to adapt them to the exigencies of present-day production. There is included therefore besides the plays themselves such material and suggestions as experience with the Harvard Dramatic Club has shown to be either needful or helpful.

There are also added brief notes on each play in which the attempt is made to give a general idea of what the plays were like in their original form. In each case is given such information as the age and origin of the play; and also the reprint which has been used as the source.

One thing should be perfectly clear: that this is not an

attempt to reproduce exactly or anywhere near exactly, for purposes of study in a true sense of the word, dramatic literature of the Middle Ages. Where the old plays seemed to have the requisite proportion and construction, they are left pretty much as they were found, merely translated. But where a change would, it seemed, improve for modern effectiveness or for modern practicability, a play that otherwise had interest, there has been no hesitation about making that change. I trust however that in no case is a play so altered as to lose its national or cultural characteristics.

Those to whom I am indebted for help in this little volume are many. Professor Taylor Starck of Harvard, Professor Charles E. Fay of Tufts, and Mrs. Margaret Barnes of Cambridge, I wish to thank for the help they have offered me in the translations; and for their interest in and frequent helpful criticism of the book as a whole. To Professor Esther W. Bates of Boston University, who has been producing *Miracle Plays* for years, I owe many suggestions from the production point of view. And last but by no means least my thanks are due to Mr. Briggs of the Widener Memorial Library of Harvard for allowing me free run in the inexhaustible stacks of that collection.

D. F. R.

New York
January, 1928

PART I

PRODUCED PLAYS

THE PAGEANT OF THE SHEAR-
MEN AND TAILORS

Coventry Miracle Play Adapted By

JOHN MASON BROWN

Reprinted from the *Theatre Arts Monthly* for December 1925.
Produced by the Harvard Dramatic Club, Dec. 20 and 21, 1922.

CAST

ISAIAH

GABRIEL

MARY

JOSEPH

THREE SHEPHERDS

MESSENGER

HEROD

THREE KINGS

CHANTS USED

Gloria in Excelsis

As I Out Rode

THE PAGEANT OF THE SHEARMEN AND THE TAILORS

The stage should, of course, be a wagon, arranged so as to offer an upper platform for the performance and a lower one for the dressing room. The actors, waiting their cues behind the curtains of the lower platform, should be members of a Guild; in fact, the Guild of the Shearmen and Tailors. The time should be Corpus Christi 1534 or thereabouts, and the scene the streets of Coventry. The wagon should start on its slow course through the town at six in the morning and stop at every corner to offer its pageant. For though this is a Miracle Play, and treats of the Nativity, it has grown beyond the wishes of the Church, where it would originally have found shelter. Though it still teaches a Bible story to the townspeople of Coventry, it is not innocent of aiming to amuse at the same time that it instructs them, and many of its moments are tainted with secularity. A dramatist has wondered why suspicion never entered the passive heart of Joseph and has dared to present him in doubt. The Shepherds, too, with their humble offerings, are close to reality, and must have won the sympathies of the yokels of Coventry by representing them on the stage. Herod, succumbing to the familiar theatre weakness of pleasing the pit, has left mere human cruelty and conceit far behind him and grown into an exaggerated farce villain, whose entrances are cues for hisses and derisive laughter. And the ridiculous obsequiousness of the Messenger is only another element added for the sake of secular enjoyment. Where the playwright has departed most radically from the orthodox require-

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ments of the Church is in his language. By forsaking the chaste Latin of the earlier liturgical dramas and substituting the language of the streets, he has added greatly to the popular appeal of his play.

But the stage on which this play is to be acted to-day cannot be a wagon any more than the time can be the sixteenth century or the actors members of the Guild of Shearmen and Tailors. The play itself remains, however. It is taken from the version made by a humble play-doctor of 1534, one Robert Croo, in fact, who doubtless combined in it some three or four earlier and separate versions. The play remains with its simple and episodic telling of the story of the Nativity. Its chief merit is the sincerity from which it springs, for behind all of its crudities and literary inequalities there is still a touching naïveté in its writing. In the present arrangement, made with an eye to present-day performance, the prophets have been omitted because they form the weakest contributions to the story and repeat rather than advance the action. The text has been cut and occasionally rearranged, but the dialogue remains close to the original, and wherever possible represents a simplification of the early spelling rather than any serious adaptation.

Even without a wagon the play can still be done so that it holds as theatre. Its requirements in setting are as simple as the scenes it unfolds, and its costuming needs as plain as the characters it introduces. A platform, canopied as the original wagon was canopied, might well furnish an adequate setting. But the use of a front stage, separated from a raised inner stage by steps and a curtain, is quite enough to keep the pageant in continuous motion. If the archaic flavor of the text is caught in the playing, and modern sophistication is put aside for an unstudied di-

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rectness, the actors will have gone far toward catching the winning simplicities of the original performance. But behind it all there must be sincerity and remembrance of the fact that a wagon under the blue sky of Coventry in 1534 once offered sufficient scenic illusion to permit an audience to be moved by this telling of the Nativity story.

SCENE I

[After a bell has tolled twelve times and a hidden choir sung Gloria in Excelsis, ISAIAH steps before the curtain of the inner stage and speaks the prologue.]

ISAIAH

The Sovereign that seeth every secret,
He saves you all, and makes you perfect and strong.
And gives us grace with his mercy to meet.
For now in great misery mankind is bound.
The serpent hath given us so deadly a wound
That no creature is able for us to release
Till God's anointment of Judea doth cease.

Then shall much mirth and joy increase
And the right root in Israel spring,
That shall bring forth the grain of holiness;
And out of danger he shall us bring,
Into that region where he is King,
Which above all other far doth abound.
And that cruel Satan, he shall confound.

Behold, a maid shall conceive a child,
And will get us more grace than ever men had,
His mother, a maiden, nothing defiled.
She is chosen to bear the Son, Almighty God.
Lo, sufferers, now may you be glad,
For of this maiden we may all be fain,

8 PAGEANT OF SHEARMEN AND TAILORS

For Adam, that now lieth in sorrows full sad,
Her glorious birth shall redeem him again
From bondage and thrall.

Now be merry, every man,
For this deed briefly in Israel shall be done,
And before the Father enthroned,
That shall gladden us all.

More of this matter fain would I unfold,
But longer time I have not here for to dwell.
May that Lord that is merciful, us in his mercy hold
For to save our souls from the darkness of hell;
And to his bliss,
He us bring,
As he is
Both Lord and King,
And shall be everlasting,
In secula seculorum, Amen!

[*The CHOIR breaks into Gloria, the stage darkens, and ISAIAH disappears.*]

SCENE II

[*At the conclusion of the Gloria, the bell tolls three times, and MARY is discovered, with the ANGEL GABRIEL beside her on the inner stage.*]

GABRIEL

Hail, Mary, full of grace!
Our Lord is with thee!
Above all women that ever was,
Lady, blessedest must thou be.

MARY [*Kneels.*]

Almighty Father and King of Bliss,
From all misfortunes save me now,

For inwardly my spirit troubled is
That I'm to be a mother, and know not how.

GABRIEL

Dread thee nothing, Maiden, of this;
From Heaven above hither am I sent
On a mission from that King of Bliss,
Unto Thee, lady and virgin reverent,
Saluting Thee here as most excellent,
Whose virtue above all other doth so abound,
Wherefore in Thee grace shall be found;
For Thou shalt conceive upon this ground,
The Second Person of God enthroned;
He will be born of Thee alone;
Without sin thou shalt Him see.
Thy grace and thy goodness will never be gone,
But ever live in virginity.

MARY

I marvel sore how that may be.
Man's company knew I never yet,
Nor never to know, swear I me,
While that our Lord sendeth me wit.

GABRIEL

The Holy Ghost in Thee shall light,
And shadow thy soul with virtue,
From the Father that is on high.
These words, Turtle, they be full true.
The child that of thee shall be born
Is the Second Person of the Trinity;
He shall save what was forlorn,
And the fiend's power destroy shall he.

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MARY

Now, that this be the Lord's will,
His high pleasure for to fulfill,
As His own hand-maid I submit me.

GABRIEL

Now blessed be the time set
That thou wast born in thy degree!
For now is the knot surely knit,
And God conceived in Trinity.
Now farewell, lady of mightiest grace,
Bound for the Godhead now I leave.

MARY

May God thee guide in every case,
And all my proudness may He cleave.

[GABRIEL *leaves* MARY, *who is bending low in prayer a moment later when* JOSEPH *appears.*]

JOSEPH

Mary, my wife so dear,
How do ye, dame, and what cheer,
Is with you this eventide?

MARY

Truly, husband, I am here,
Our Lord's will for to abide.

JOSEPH

What, Mary! Who hath been here since I went—
To rage with thee?

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MARY

Sir, here was neither man, nor man's even
But only the sound of our Lord God in Heaven.

JOSEPH

Say not so, woman, for shame, let be!
Tell me, woman, whose is this child.

MARY

None but yours, husband so mild,
And that shall be seen, awhile.

JOSEPH

But mine? Alas! Alas! Why say you so?
Welaway! Woman, now I may go,
Beguiled as many another is.

MARY

Nay, truly, Sir, ye be not beguiled,
Nor with spot of sin am I defiled;
Trust ye well, husband.

JOSEPH

Husband, in faith! And that a-cold!
Ah! Welaway, Joseph, as thou art old,
Like a fool man may you stand
And trust.
But, in faith, Mary, thou art in sin;
So much as I have cherished thee, dame, and all thy kin,
Behind my back to serve me thus!

All old men, take example by me,
How I am beguiled here may you see!—
To have wed so young a child.
Now farewell, Mary, I leave thee here alone,—

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For I will no more beguiled be,
Nor friend or foe. [*He leaves her.*]
Now because of this I am full sad.
Never again can my life be glad.
No farther may I go.

[*He lies down to sleep, MARY prays, GABRIEL passes by MARY above, looking down on her, and crosses to JOSEPH.*]

GABRIEL

Arise up, Joseph, and go home again,
Unto Mary, thy wife, who hath need of thee
To comfort her like that thou be fain,
For, Joseph, a clean maiden is she:
She hath conceived without shame,
The Second Person in the Trinity,
And Jesus shall be His name,
And all this world shall saved be;
Be not aghast.

[*GABRIEL exits.*]

JOSEPH

Now, Lord, I thank Thee with heart full sad.
For of these tidings I am so glad,
That all my care away is cast;
Wherefore to Mary I will in haste.

[*Returns to MARY.*]

Ah, Mary, Mary, I kneel full low;
Forgive me, sweet wife, for now I know
That I did thee misname.
Mercy, Mary! While I live,
Never, sweet wife, pain will I give
To thee in earnest or in game.

MARY

Now, the Lord in Heaven, sir, He you forgive!
And I do forgive you in His name.

JOSEPH

Aye, truly, sweet wife, to you I say the same.
But now to Bethlehem must I wind,
And show myself, so full of care;
For were I to leave you thus behind,—
God wot, the while, dame, how you should fare.

MARY

Nay, hardly, husband, dread you nothing;
For I will walk with you on the way.
I trust in God, All Mighty King,
To speed us right well in our journey.

JOSEPH

Now I thank you, Mary, for your goodness,
That you my words will not blame;
And since that to Bethlehem we shall us dress,
Go we together in God's holy name.

[*They circle the clear space of the fore-stage and exit.*]

SCENE 3

[*The CHOIR chants, and the bell sounds three times. The curtains of the inner stage part, and the FIRST SHEPHERD is seen walking from the very back of it toward the audience.*]

FIRST SHEPHERD

Save my poor fellows and me!
For I know not where my sheep nor they be.

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Now is it nigh the middest of the night,
The night that is so cold.
These weathers are dark and dim of light
And of these fellows, have I no sight.
But I will call to them with all my might;
Full well my voice they know.
What ho! Fellows! Ho! Ho! Ho!

[*The SECOND and THIRD SHEPHERDS enter from one side of the fore-stage and cross to the central steps, calling as they walk.*]

SECOND SHEPHERD

Hark, Sim! I hear our brother's voice.
That is his, I right well know,
Therefore toward him let us go.

[*They cross the stage to the central steps, calling as they walk. The FIRST SHEPHERD answers.*]

I am right glad we have him found!

[*They mount the stairs just as the FIRST SHEPHERD greets them from the inner steps.*]

Brother, where hast thou been so long?
When it is so cold this night!

FIRST SHEPHERD

Ah, friends, there came this night
A gust of wind that left me full sore affright.
Then for to go where I knew not whither,
I travelled on this lea hither and thither.

THIRD SHEPHERD

Brother, now we be past that fright,
And it is far within the night.

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Full soon will spring the daylight,
It draweth full near the tide.

Awhile here let us rest,
And repast ourselves of our best;
Till that the sun rise in the east,
Let us all here abide.

[*As they sit down on the steps to eat, a thin, bright ray of light shines down behind them. The THIRD SHEPHERD jumps to his feet.*]

THIRD SHEPHERD

Brothers, look up and behold!
What is yonder thing that shineth so bright?
As long as ever I have watched my fold,
Yet never saw I such a sight.
Now is come the time our fathers have told
When in the winter's night so cold
A child of maiden should be born,
In whom all prophecies shall be fulfilled.

FIRST SHEPHERD

So hath said the Prophet Isaiah
That a child should be born of a maiden so bright
In winter, near the shortest day
Or else in the middle of the night.

SECOND SHEPHERD

Brother, well now hast thou spoken,
Let us pray to give Him token
Of the gladness in our hearts.
Beloved God, most of might,
We pray to Thee as it is right,
That our grace it be to see that sight.

[*From off-stage voices swell into Gloria in Excelsis.*]

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THIRD SHEPHERD

Hark, they sing above the clouds so clear
Never have I heard so merry a choir;
Now, gentle brother, draw we near,
To hear their gentle harmony.

FIRST SHEPHERD

"*Gloria, gloria in excelsis,*" that was their song.
Now let us go and take us hence
To worship that child of high magnificence,
That we may sing in his presence,
"Et in terra pax omnibus."

[GABRIEL *enters*. The SHEPHERDS *drop to their knees in wonder*.]

GABRIEL

Gracious Herdsmen,
Dread ye nothing,
Of this star that you do see.
For this same morn,
God's son is born
In Bethlehem of a maiden free.
So hie thee hither with all speed
And see the Christ-child in His bed.

[GABRIEL *beckons the SHEPHERDS to leave*. They *arise, gather their belongings, and sing "As I out rode" as they go*.]

SCENE IV

[*The bell tolls three times*. MARY *is discovered with the CHRIST-CHILD in her arms*. JOSEPH *stands beside her*.]

MARY

Ah, Joseph, husband, come hither anon,
See my child, that is King of Bliss.

JOSEPH. [*Kneels before MARY.*]

Now welcome to me, King of man,
I take thee with all the homage I can,
Thy sweet mouth here will I kiss.

MARY

Ah, Joseph, husband, my child waxes cold,
And we have no fire to warm Him with.

JOSEPH

Now in my arms Him shall I fold.

[*As JOSEPH reaches for the CHILD, the SHEPHERDS' song becomes audible. Soon they enter and bow low before MARY and the CHRIST-CHILD.*]

FIRST SHEPHERD

Hail, maiden mother and wife so mild!
As the angel said so have we found.

[*He advances to MARY.*]

I have nothing to present thy child
But my pipe. Hold! Take it in Thy hand.
Much pleasure in it have I found.
And now to honor Thy glorious birth
Thou shalt have it to give Thee mirth.

SECOND SHEPHERD

Now, hail to thee, Child, and Thy dame!

[*Advances to MARY.*]

18 PAGEANT OF SHEARMEN AND TAILORS

For in a poor lodging here art Thou laid
As the Angel who told us Thy name said.
Hold, take Thou my hat on Thy head.
Now of no weather hast Thou need to complain,
Neither of wind, sun, hail, nor rain.

THIRD SHEPHERD

Hail be Thou, Lord over Water and Lands,
For Thy coming all make mirth.

[*Kneeling before MARY.*]

Have Thou my mittens to put on Thy hands.
With no other present can I hail Thy birth.

MARY

Now, gracious herdsman,
For your coming
To my child shall I pray,
As He is Heaven's King,
To grant you His blessing.

[*The SHEPHERDS bow low and retire.*]

SCENE V

[*The bell is struck once. A great noise is heard outside. Then, seeming to push his way through the crowd, and speaking before he is seen, the MESSENGER enters.*]

MESSENGER

Silence, masters and barons of great renown,
Silence, companions little and great,
I command you to keep silent;
Silence, so that the noble king Herod may here be present.
In the name of Herod, Silence, I command you.

PAGEANT OF SHEARMEN AND TAILORS 19

HEROD. [*Entering.*]

Here am I, Judge and King of Israel,
And the mightiest conqueror that ever walked on ground;
For I am even he that made both heaven and hell,
And by my mighty power hold up this world round.
I am the cause of this great light and thunder;
It is through my fury that they such noise do make.
My fearful countenance the clouds so doth encumber
That oftentimes for dread thereof the very earth doth
quake.

Look ye, when I with malice this bright brand do shake
All the whole world from the north to the south
I may destroy with one word of my mouth.

To recount unto you my innumerable substance,—
That were much for anyone to tell;
For all the whole Orient is under my obedience,
And prince am I of purgatory and chief captain of hell;
And those tyrannous traitors by force may I compel
Mine enemies to vanquish and into dust them drive,
And with a twinkle of my eye not one be left alive.
Behold my countenance and my color,
Brighter than the sun in the middle of the day.
Where can you have such a great succor
As to behold my person that is so gay?
My face and my fashion, with my gorgeous array,—
He that had the grace always thereon to think,
He might live always without other meat or drink.

And thus my triumphant fame most highest doth abound
Throughout this world in all regions around,
Resembling the father of that most mighty Mahomet;
From Jupiter am I descended and cousin to the great God,
And named the most renowned king Herod,
Who hath all princes under subjection

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And their whole power under my protection.
And therefore, my herald, here, called Calcas,
Warn thou every port where new ships arrive,
Nor allow any strangers through my realm to pass
Except for their passage do they five marks pay.
Now speed you hastily,
For they that will the contrary
Upon a gallows shall hanged be,
And, by Mahomet, of me they will get no grace!

MESSENGER

Now, Lord and Master, in all due haste,
Thy worthy will it shall be wrought,
And thy royal countries shall be passed
In as short a time as can be thought.

[*Exit.*]

HEROD

Now shall our regions throughout be sought
In every place both east and west;
If any caitiffs to me be brought,
It shall be nothing for their best,
My realms shall be searched both far and wide,
And as my subjects to my royal pride
Strange caitiffs shall be brought in bondage to my side.

SCENE VI

[*The bell strikes once. HEROD is discovered seated on his throne. The MESSENGER runs to him.*]

MESSENGER

Hail, Lord Most of Might!
Thy commandment was right;
Into thy land is come this night

Three kings with a great company.

HEROD

What make these kings in this country?

MESSENGER

They seek a king and a child, they say.

HEROD. [*Rising in rage.*]

Of what age should he be?

MESSENGER

Scant twelve days in full.

HEROD

And was he so late born?

MESSENGER

So they told me, Sir, this same day in the morn.

HEROD

Now, on pain of death, bring them before me.
Therefore, Herald, go with all speed,
And bring those kings within my sight
Before they find that all they need
Is haste to save them from their plight.
And in Jerusalem inquire more of the child,
But I warn thee that thy words be mild,
And that thou use both craft and wile
So that the child and those three kings may be beguiled.

SCENE VII

[*The bell tolls three times. The curtains of the inner stage part. The FIRST KING is walking from the back when he meets the SECOND and THIRD KINGS, who enter from different sides of the fore-stage. They bow low.*]

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FIRST KING

To seek a child is my intent,
Guided by the light that star has lent.

SECOND KING

From far above have I brought this,
As present and tribute to the King of Bliss.

THIRD KING

Sirs, I pray you right humbly
That I may go with you in company.

[*They all kneel.*]

To Almighty God now pray we.
That his precious person we may see.

MESSENGER. [*Entering.*]

Hail, Sir Kings, of high degree,
Herod, king of these countries wide,
Desireth to speak with all you three,
And for your coming doth abide.

FIRST KING

Sir, at his will we be right pleased.
Hoping he will be appeased
We will hie unto that Lord's place,
To see the Child that he may grant us grace.

[*They exit with the MESSENGER.*]

SCENE VIII

[*One striking of the bell. HEROD is seated on his throne.
The MESSENGER enters with the THREE KINGS.*]

MESSENGER

Hail, lord without a peer!

We have brought these three kings here.

HEROD

Sir Kings, as I am given to understand,
A star hath guided you into my land,
By reason of its beams so bright.
How long is it, surely,
Since of that star you first had sight?

FIRST KING

Sir King, the very truth to say,
And to set your mind at rest,
This same is the twelfth day
Since it appeared to us in the west.

HEROD

Brothers, then there is no more to say,
But with heart and will keep ye your journey
And come home by me this same way
Of your news that I might know.
You shall triumph in this country,
And with great concord banquet with me,
And that Child myself I then will see
And honor Him also.

SECOND KING

Sire, your commandment we will fulfill,
And humbly obey ourselves thereto,
You may be sure that we will
Bring the Child before you, Sire,
Being certain you will Him admire.

HEROD

Your passport is for a hundred days,
In which you may trace full many ways.

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Your wanderings shall be free of command
While you seek a King within my land.

THIRD KING

Now, farewell, king of high degree,
Humbly of thee we take our leave.

HEROD

Then adieu, sir kings, all three,
And while I live be bold of me,
There is nothing in this country
But for your own you shall it take.

[*The KINGS bow low before HEROD, and are shown out by the MESSENGER.*]

HEROD

Now these three kings have gone their way,
Unwisely and unwittingly have they wrought.
When they come again they shall die that same day.

SCENE IX

[*The bell tolls three times. Off-stage the choir chants Gloria in Excelsis. At its conclusion the bell sounds again. MARY is seated, with the CHRIST-CHILD in her arms. JOSEPH stands beside her. The THREE KINGS kneel on the steps before him.*]

FIRST KING

Hail Lord, who all this world hath wrought!
Hail God and Man together made!
To Thy lowly stable here
A cup of gold thus have I brought,
Tokening Thou art without peer.
[*He rises, presents his gift, and returns to the steps.*]

SECOND KING

Hail be Thou, Lord of high Magnificence!
 Tokening of priesthood and high dignity of office
 To Thee I offer a cup full of incense
 For it behooveth Thee to have such sacrifice.
[He places the cup at MARY'S feet and returns to the steps.]

THIRD KING

Hail be Thou, Lord of high Magnificence!
 I have brough Thee myrrh for mortality.
 Into knowledge shalt Thou mankind restore,
 Mankind which will live by Thy death upon a tree.

[He presents his gift.]

MARY

God have mercy on you, kind Kings!
 The guiding of the Godhead hath brought you hither!
 For these provisions which to my sweet Son you make,
 He will give you blessings when you your road retake.

[The choir breaks into Gloria.]

SCENE X

[The bell sounds, and the THREE KINGS enter on the inner stage.]

FIRST KING

Sir Kings, after our promise
 We needs must to Herod go.

SECOND KING

Brothers, our travels have been long and hard,
 And now I feel the need of rest,
 Though it doth our speed retard.

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THIRD KING

Let us all rest awhile upon this ground.
May the grace of the Sweet Child save us all sound.
[*The KINGS have reached the steps. Here they lie down,
and sleep. GABRIEL appears to them.*]

GABRIEL

King of Taurus, Sir Jasper,
King of Araby, Sir Balthasar,
Melchior, King of Aginar,
To you now am I sent.
For dread of Herod go you westward home.
Into those parts, when you come down,
You shall be buried with great renown.
The Holy Ghost this knowledge hath sent.
[*Exit. The KINGS awaken, rubbing their eyes.*]

FIRST KING

Awake, Sir Kings, I pray you . . .
For the voice of an angel I heard in my dreams.

SECOND KING

That is full truth that you do say,
For he rehearsed our names plain.

THIRD KING

He bade that we should go down by the westward
For fear of Herod's dread betrayal.

FIRST KING

May the Child we have sought guide our way.
Now farewell, the fairest of men,
And thanks on high for our meeting to-day.

SECOND KING

Now farewell, Sir Jasper, farewell to you now!
Farewell, Sir Balthasar, to you do I bow.

THIRD KING

Now He that made us meet on plain,
And offer to Mary in her stable,
May He give us grace to meet again
All together in heaven.

[The THREE KINGS bow low. The FIRST KING exits to the left. The SECOND and THIRD KINGS descend the steps to the fore-stage, bow low again, and walk slowly off, the SECOND to the right, the THIRD to the left, as the lights dim off.]

SCENE XI

[The bell strikes once. HEROD is seated on his throne. The MESSENGER runs in and, trembling, hurls himself before HEROD.]

MESSENGER

Hail, King, most worthy in the world,
Hail, maintainer of courtesy throughout the world!
These three kings for whom thou sent,
Who should come again before thee here present,
Another way, Lord, home they went,
Forgetful of their promise.

[HEROD jumps to his feet in rage.]

HEROD

Another way? Out! Out! Out!
Have these foul traitors done me this deed?
I stamp! I stare! I look all about!
If I could take them, I'd burn them at the stake!

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I scream! I rave! And now I do run wild!
Yea! And that child of Bethlehem, I shall have his head!

Mark you, Sir messenger, I would fain
Find all young children of this country dead,
By the quick sword to be slain!
Now thus have I sworn, for you shall go
Working my will both day and night,
With all my soldiers' might.
Then fain will I trip like a doe
When the dead be brought before my sight.

SCENE XII

[JOSEPH and MARY, *with the CHRIST-CHILD in her arms,*
are discovered. GABRIEL is speaking to them.]

GABRIEL

Mary and Joseph, unto you I say
A sweet word from the Father of Right.
Out of Bethlehem into Egypt go thy way,
And take with you the King, full of might,
For fear of Herod's wrath.

[*Exit.*]

JOSEPH

Arise up, Mary, hastily and soon.
Our Lord's will needs must be done,
Like as the angel bade us.

MARY

Meekly, Joseph, my noble spouse,
Toward that country let us repair.
In Egypt to some hidden house,
God grant us grace to come safe there.

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[They rise to go. The GLORIA swells out from back-stage until it reaches a solemn "Amen." At its conclusion comes a heavy tolling of the bell, and the lights of the auditorium come on.]

THE TOWNELEY PLAY

Adapted by

RANDALL CAYFORD BURRELL

Produced by the Harvard Dramatic Club, Dec. 18 and 19, 1923.

CAST

GABRIEL
MARY
JOSEPH
ELIZABETH
HEROD
FIRST SHEPHERD
SECOND SHEPHERD
THIRD SHEPHERD
KING OF ARABY
KING OF TARS
KING OF SABA
MESSENGER

CHANTS USED

Gloria in Excelsis
Pange Lingua

THE TOWNELEY PLAY

SCENE I

[MARY *kneeling*. GABRIEL *appears to her*.]

Hail, Mary, gracious!
Hail, maiden and God's spouse!
Unto thee I bow.
Of all virgins thou art queen
That ever was or shall be seen
I solemnly do vow.

Hail, Mary, and well thou be!
My Lord of Heaven is with thee
Without end.
Hail, woman without peer!
Goodly lady, have thou no fear,
That I commend.

For thou hast gained for all thine own
The grace of God, but scarcely known
Since Adam's plight.
This is the grace that thee betides
Thou shalt conceive within thy sides
A child of might.

MARY

Who art thou?

GABRIEL

Gabriel,
God's strength and his angel
That comes to thee.

MARY

A greeting strange is this my share—
A child thou me commandst to bear?
How should it be?

GABRIEL

The child that thou shalt bear, Madame,
Shall God's son be called by name.
And see, Mary,
Elizabeth, thy cousin, of children none,
Has in her age conceived a son
Of Zachary.

MARY

I love my Lord of high command
I am his maiden at his hand
And in his hold.
I believe the message thou dost bring
Shall come to pass in everything
As thou hast told.

GABRIEL

Mary, maiden mild
Gentle virgin child
My leave from thee I take.

MARY

Go to my friend
Who thee did send
For mankind's sake.

[ANGEL goes out. MARY gazes after him. After a moment
JOSEPH enters.]

JOSEPH

Hail, Mary, and well be ye!
Why, good woman, what cheer with thee?

MARY

The better, Sir, for you.

JOSEPH

So would I woman, that you were
But certes, Mary, I grieve full sore
It standeth so with thee now
And yet one thing I fain would know
Tell me to whom this child I owe?

MARY

Sir, you and God above.

JOSEPH

Mine, Mary? Do away thy din
That I should aught have part therein
Thou needs it not to prove.
Wherefor names thou me thereto?
I had never with thee to do.
Whose is that child, now tell me true?

MARY

Sir, without doubt, of God and you.

JOSEPH

It is not so I told thee!
It is far from right, I know.
And I regret what thou hast done, so
To complete thy sinning.
That thou must speak of thyself ill
It is full sore against my will.
Better thou had said nothing.

MARY

Yea, God he knows my every doing.

[JOSEPH *steps to one side.*]

JOSEPH

Now this is a wonder thing
I can naught say thereto.
But in my heart I have great pain
To hinder it is all in vain.
For grief what shall I do?

God's and mine she says it is!
I will not father it, she says amiss.
For shame that she should try
To hide her villainy by me
Such a thing can never be.
I rue that ever we met.

Should an angel this deed have wrought?
Such excusing helps her not,
No, nothing she can say.
A heavenly thing forsooth is he
And she is earthly; this may not be,
It is some other way.

She is as clean as crystal clear
For me, and while I live she shall be dear.
Always it will be so.
And then am I the cause of her deed?
I should have taken better heed.
Alas, such is my woe!

But, look ye, if it so befall
God's son that she be withal,
If such grace her betide,
I know well that I am not he
Which is worthy with her to be
And walk with her beside.

Therefore to wilderness I will
Her company I'll shun until
God tells me nay.
And never longer with her deal
But softly shall I from her steal
And now I go away.

[JOSEPH *starts to go*. GABRIEL *appears before him*.]

GABRIEL

Beware, Joseph, and mend thy thought,
I warn thee well, and go thee not
To wilderness so wild.
Turn home to thy spouse again
Look thou deem in her no stain
For she was never defiled.
Know'st thou not the working of God's host?
She has conceived the Holy Ghost.
And she shall bear God's son.
Forbear with her in thy degree,
Meek and helpful look thou be.
And so must thou with her dwell on.

[GABRIEL *goes*. JOSEPH *turns back*.]

JOSEPH

A, Lord, I love thee all alone
That calls me thus to be the one
To guard the child from fear,
When I have so ungratefully gone
And unduly judged upon
Mary, that darling dear.

I rue full sore what I have said
And that I did her thus upbraid,

Since she not guilty is.
Therefore to her now will I wend
And pray her for to be my friend
And ask her forgiveness.

[*To MARY.*]

A, Mary wife, what cheer?

MARY

The better, Sir, that you are here.
Thus long where have ye been?

JOSEPH

In truth, walking about like a fool
That wrongly to you was cruel;
I wish not what I mean.
But well know I and verily
I have trespassed to God and thee:
Forgive me, I thee pray.

MARY

Now, all that ever ye said me to
God forgives and I do
With all the might I may.

JOSEPH

Gramercy, Mary, for thy goodwill,
So kindly forgive that I said ill
When I did thee upbraid.
But, well is he whose mild meek wife
Bears such a son,
He may well hold him paid.

A, but I am light as wind.
He that may both loose and bind

And every wrong amend
Leave me grace, power, and might
My wife and her sweet young wight
To keep to my life's end.

MARY

But, husband, one thing of you most meekly:
Let us to Elizabeth hastily,
Who with child is.

JOSEPH

A, God's sake, is she with child?
Then must we hasten Mary mild,
To comfort her in this.

[They go out. Darkness.]

SCENE II

[MARY and JOSEPH enter together.]

JOSEPH

A! A! wife in faith I weary.
But lo! this is the house of Zachary
Now rest us here.

MARY

Nay, husband, I will go there
To see how Elizabeth doth fare.

[ELIZABETH enters.]

A, she doth appear.
By the Lord of Heaven that sitteth above
And guards all things with holy love,
Art safe, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

Welcome, Mary, blessed cousin.
Joyful am I of thy coming
To me from Nazareth.

MARY

How stands it with you, my dame?

ELIZABETH

Well, my daughter and good dame,
As can be for mine age.

MARY

To speak with you, full long I thought,
Of the joy and bliss that God hath brought
To thee and Zachary sage.

ELIZABETH

Full long shall I the better be
That I may speak my fill with thee
My dear kinswoman.
To wit, how do thy good friends fare
In thy country where they are,
Tell we what thou can.
And how thou farest, my dear darling?

MARY

Well, dame, Gramercy your asking
As dear to their hearts ye were.

ELIZABETH

And Joachim, thy father of fame,
And Anna, my niece, and thy dame,
How stands it with him and her?

MARY

Dame, yet are they both in life,
Both Joachim and Anna his wife.

ELIZABETH

Else were my heart full sore.

MARY

God will it, that all may
Say what ye say
Bless you therefor.

ELIZABETH

Blessed be thou of all women
And the fruit that I well ken
Within the womb of thee.
And this time may I bless
That my Lord's mother is
Come thus to me.

And also Mary blessed be thou,
That steadfastly would trow
The words of our heavenly King.
Therefore all things now shall be known
That unto thee were said or shown
By the angel's greeting.

MARY

Magnificat anima dominum,
My soul loves my Lord above,
My spirit is glad with love,
My God that is my salvation!

Lo, thereof what me shall betide
All nations on every side

Blessed shall me call,
For he that is full of might
Many things has set aright
His name be blessed above all.

And his mercy goes also
From tribe to tribe, even although
They fear him.
Great deeds he has wrought
And destroyed in his thought
Proud men and Satan's limb.

Mighty men of sin he made dead
And then he raised up in their stead
The meek men of heart.
The hungry great good he has given,
In vain the rich folk all have striven
With riches not to part.

Elizabeth, mine aunt dear,
My leave I take of you here.
It is time that we should go.

ELIZABETH

Wherever thou goest have no fear
Come kiss me, daughter, be of good cheer
Before ye go.
My good child, farewell now to thee.
May ye of comfort good always be,
For thou art full of grace.
Greet well all of our dear kindred!
That Lord, that hath given to thee grace,
May he save all that dwell in this place.

[MARY and JOSEPH go one way. ELIZABETH the other.
Darkness.]

SCENE III

[*Enter* FIRST SHEPHERD.]

FIRST SHEPHERD

Lord, but this weather is cold, and I am ill wrapped,
Nigh dazed, were the truth told, so long have I napped.
My legs under me fold; my fingers are chapped.
With such like I don't hold, for I am

In sorrow.

In storms and tempest,
Now in the East, now in the West,
Woe is him has never rest,
Midday nor morrow!

But we seely shepherds that walk on the moor,
In faith we're nigh at hand to be put out of door.
No wonder, as it doth stand, if we be poor,
For the tilth of our land lies as fallow as the floor,
As ye ken.

We're so burdened and tanned,
Overtaxed and unmanned,
We're made tame to the hand
Of these gentry men.

[*Enter* SECOND SHEPHERD.]

SECOND SHEPHERD

Benste and Dominus! What may this mean?
Why fares the world thus! The like never were seen!
Lord, but it is spiteful and grievous, this weather so keen!
And the frost so hideous—it waters mine eye!

That's no lie!

Now in dry, now in wet,
Now in snow, now in sleet,

When my shoes freeze to my feet,
It's not all so easy.

Didst aught of Daw?

FIRST SHEPHERD

Yea, on the pasture land
I heard him blow just before; he comes nigh at hand,
Below there
Stand still.

SECOND SHEPHERD

Why?

FIRST SHEPHERD

For he comes, I hope?

[*Enter* THIRD SHEPHERD.]

THIRD SHEPHERD

Christ's cross me speed and St. Nicholas
Thereof in sooth I had need, it is worse than it was.

Never before fared this world so,
With marvels that greater grow,
Now in weal, now in woe,
And everything changeth.

There was never since Noah's flood such floods seen;
Winds and rains so rude and storms so keen;
Some stammered, some stood in doubt, as I ween.—
Now God turn all to good, I say as I mean.

For ponder
How these floods all drown,
Both in fields and in town,
And bear all down
And that is a wonder!

SECOND SHEPHERD

Now I you pray,
On this green let us lie.

FIRST SHEPHERD

O'er these troubles yet chafe?

SECOND SHEPHERD

Let your anger go by,—
Come do as I say.

[As they are about to lie down, ANGEL appears. The choristers sing the Gloria and continue singing softly to the end of the scene.]

ANGEL

Rise, herdsmen, gentle, attend ye, for now is he born,
God is made your friend now on this morn

Lo! Thus doth he command—
Go to Bethlehem, see
Where he lieth so free
In a manger so lowly
Where twain beasts stand.

[Goes.]

FIRST SHEPHERD

This was a fine voice, even as ever I heard,
It is a marvel, by St. Stephen, thus with dread to be stirred.

SECOND SHEPHERD

'Twas of God's Son from Heaven be there tidings
averred.
All the wood with a lightening, methought, at his word
Shone fair.

THIRD SHEPHERD

Of a child did he tell
In Bethlehem, mark ye well.

FIRST SHEPHERD

That this star yonder doth spell
Let us seek there.

SECOND SHEPHERD

Go now, let us fare, the place is us near.

THIRD SHEPHERD

I am ready and eager to be there; let us together with
cheer,
To that bright one go.
Lord, if thy will it be,
Untaught are we all three,
Some kind of joy grant us, that we thy creatures comfort
may know.

[They go out. Darkness.]

SCENE IV

[The FIRST KING enters.]

FIRST KING

Lord, from whom this light is sent,
And unto me this sight has sent,
I pray to thee, with good intent,
From shame me shield.
So that me no harm befall
By ways so wild.

To that I in some lands have been
To find what this star may mean,
That has led, with bright shine,
From my country;
Now wend I will without end,
The truth to see.

[*The SECOND KING enters.*]

SECOND KING

Certes, I saw never none so bright,
I shall never rest by day or night,
Till I know whence may come this light
And from what place
He that it sent unto my sight,
Give me that grace.

FIRST KING

A, sir, whither are ye away?
Tell me, good sir, I you pray.

SECOND KING

Certes, I trow, truly to say,
None knows but I.
I have followed yon star, verily,
From Araby.
For I am king of that country,
And Melchior there call men me.

FIRST KING

And king, Sir, was I wont to be
In Tars, at home,
Both of town and city.
Jaspar is my name.

[*THIRD KING enters.*]

THIRD KING

A, Lord, in land what may this mean,
So wondrous a sight was never seen,
Such a star, shining so sheen,
Saw I never none.
It gives light over all it seems
From him alone.

What it may mean that I know not,
But yonder are two, me thinks, in thought.
I thank him who has them hither brought
Thus unto me.
I shall assay if they know aught
Of what it be.

Lordlings, that are alive and dear,
I pray you tell me with good cheer,
Whither ye go in this manner,
And where that ye have been,
And of the star that shineth so clear,
What it may mean.

FIRST KING

Sir, I say you certainly,
From Tars for yon star sought have I.

SECOND KING

To seek yond light from Araby,
Sir, have I went.

THIRD KING

Now heartily I thank Him therefor,
That it hath sent.

FIRST KING

Good sir, what country came ye frae?

THIRD KING

The light has led me from Saba,
And Balthasar my name to say,
The truth to tell.

SECOND KING

And kings, sir, are we twain,
There where we dwell.

Now, sirs, since we are joined here,
I say we go together, far
Until we know, in some manner
For good or ill,
What it may mean, this star so clear,
By God's will.

[They go out together. Darkness.]

SCENE V.

[Enter MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER

Silence, lordings, and hold you still
Till I have said what I will,
Take good heed unto my tiding,
Both old and young,
In message that is now coming
From Herod, the King.

He commands you, everyone,
To hold no king but him alone,
And other gods ye worship none
But Mahowne so free,

And if you do, you must be slain.

Thus told he me.

[*Exit.*]

[*Enter HEROD.*]

HEROD

Silence, I call, both far and near,
I warn you leave your noises here;
Who then makes noise while I am here,
I say, shall die.
Of all this world, both far and near,
The Lord am I.

Lord am I of every land,
Of tower and town, of sea and sand;
Against me dare no man stand
That is alive,
All earthly things bow to my hand,
Both man and wife.

Man and wife, that warn I you,
That in this world is living now,
To Mahowne and me all shall bow,
Both old and young,
On him will I that each man trow
In everything.

For any thing it shall be so,
Lord over all where'er I go,
Whoe'er says nay, I shall him slay,
Where so he dwell.
The fiend, were he my foe,
I should him slay.

To fell those traitors I am bound;
And destroy those dogs in field and town
Who will not believe on Saint Mahowne
Our God so sweet;
Those evil traitors I shall fell down
Under my feet.

And therefore will I send to see
In all this land, full hastily,
To look if any dwell and be
In tower or town
That will not hold wholly on me
And on Mahowne.

[*Reënter* MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER [*Kneeling before* HEROD.]

Mahowne, that is all mighty,
My Lord, Sir Herod, thee save and see.

HEROD

Where have you been so long from me?
Vile, lazy lad.

MESSENGER

Lord, gone your herald in this country
As ye me bade.

HEROD

Do tell me fast how thou hast fared.

MESSENGER [*Getting up.*]

As I came walking through the wild,
Lord, by the way,
I met three kings seeking a child,
Thus did they say.

HEROD

To seek a child! Why such a thing?
Told they any new tiding?

MESSENGER

Yea, Lord! They said he should be king
Of town and tower,
For they went with their offering
Him to honour:

HEROD

King! The devil! But of what empire?
Of what land should the lad be sire?
Nay, should I with that traitor tire,
Sore shall he rue!

MESSENGER

Lord, by a star as bright as fire,
This king they knew.
It led them out of their country.

HEROD

We, fy! Fy! Devils on them all three!
He shall never have much from me.
That newborn lad.
When their faith in a star should be
I hold them mad.

King? What the devil other than I?
We fy on devils! Fy! Fy!
Certes, that boy shall dear aby
His death is right.
Shall he be king thus hastily?
Who the devil made him knight?
But yet first will I send and see
The answer of those low louts three.

Messenger, quick hie thou thee
And make thee cheer.
Go, bid those kings come speak with me,
Thou said were here.

[MESSENGER, *going out, meets the KINGS and is seen to converse with them. Then the SECOND KING dismisses him thus:*]

SECOND KING

Messenger, now must thou go
And tell thy lord we are all through
His will to do.
Both I and my fellows two
Shall come him to.

[MESSENGER *returns to* HEROD.]

MESSENGER

Mahowne, watch over you, my lord so dear.

HEROD

Welcome, be thou my messenger.
How hast thou fared since thou wast here?
Now let me know.

MESSENGER

Lord I have travelled far and near
Both high and low.

And done your errand, sir, truly.
The Three Kings with me have I
From Saba, Tars, and Araby,
They that you sought.

HEROD

Thy reward shalt thou have for this

For those ye brought.
And, certainly, that is good skill.

[KINGS *come forward and bow.*]

And, sirs, ye are welcome me unto.

FIRST KING

Lord, thy bidding to fulfill
Are we full through.

HEROD

Ay, many thanks for your good will,
That ye say so.

For, certes, I have wanted greatly
To speak with you and hear now why
Tell me, I pray you, specially
O'er everything,
What token saw you on the sky
Of this new king?

FIRST KING

We saw his star rise in the East,
That shall be king of man and beast.
Since then, Lord, we have not ceased
But for our rest,
With gifts rich and honest
To him that's blessed.

SECOND KING

Lord, when that star rose us before
Thereby we knew that child was born.

HEROD

Out, alas, I am forlorn
For ever more.

I would be rent and also torn
For grief and care.

Alas, that ever I should be knight
Or thought a man mickle might
That a lad, a lad should seize by right
Thus me from.
To death shall I fight
Before it be so.

Ye noble kings, harken my trend,
Ye shall have safe conduct to wend
But come again some time to spend
With me, sirs, I pray you.
Ye shall find me a faithful friend
If so ye do.

If it be true this new tiding,
Some worship would I do that king,
Therefore I pray you that ye bring
Me tidings soon.

FIRST KING

All ready, Lord, at your bidding
It shall be done.

[*The KINGS turn from HEROD who goes out followed by his MESSENGER.*]

SECOND KING

Alas, in the world how have we sped,
Where is the light that us has led?
Some cloud forsooth that star has clad
From us away.
Great trouble have we now instead.
What may we say?

THIRD KING

Woe to Herod, that cursed wight,
Woe to that tyrant, day and night,
For through him have we lost that sight
And by his guile,
That shone to us with beams so bright
Within a while.

FIRST KING

Lords, let us pray all three,
To that lord whose nativity
This star betokens that we can see,
And with his might
Pray we specially that he
Will light again the night.

THIRD KING

Thou child, whose might no tongue may tell,
As thou art Lord of Heaven and Hell,
Thy noble star Emmanuel
Thou send us here
That we may know by firth and fell
How we shall fare.

SECOND KING

Ah, to that child be ever honour,
That in this tide and faithful hour
Has lent us light for our succour
In this manner.

THIRD KING

We love thee, Lord of town and tower,
Wholly together.

We ought to love him over all thing,
That thus has sent us our asking

Behold the star is yonder shining,
Sirs, surely.
Of this child shall we have knowing
I hope near by.

SECOND KING

Lordings dear, we fear now naught,
Our great travel to an end is brought;
Yonder is the place that we have sought
From far country,
Yonder is the child that all has wrought,
Behold and see.

[*They go out. Darkness.*]

SCENE VI

[*The chorus chants the Pange Lingua. MARY sits with the CHILD in her arms. Enter JOSEPH.*]

JOSEPH

Aye! Lord but the weather is cold,
The fullest freeze that ever I did feel.
I pray God help them that are old
And namely them who are unwell.
So may I say.
Now, good God, be thou my guide
As best thou may.
Aye! Lord God, what light is this
That comes shining so suddenly?
When I come home unto Mary
I'll ask her what it is.

Ay, here be God. May I come near?

MARY

You are welcome, Sir.

JOSEPH

Say, Mary, daughter, what cheer with thee?

MARY

Right good Joseph as has been aye.

JOSEPH

Oh Mary, what sweet thing is that on thy knee?

MARY

That is my son the sooth to say
That is so good.

JOSEPH

Well is me I came this day
To bring this food.
I marvel mickle of this light
That thus is shining in this place
For sooth it is a wondrous sight!

MARY

This has He ordained in the grace,
My son so young
A star to be shining a space
When he be born.
For Balaam told full long before
How that a star should rise full high,
And of a maiden should be born
A son that shall our Saviour be
From cares so keen,
For sooth it is my son so free
Whom Balaam did mean.

JOSEPH

Now welcome flower fairest of hue.

I shall do honour with main and might.
Hail my maker! Hail Christ Jesus!
Hail Royal King, Root of all Right!
Hail Saviour!
Hail my Lord Bearer of Light!
Hail blessed flower!

MARY

Now, Lord that all this world shall win,
To thee my son now do I say,
Here is no bed to lay thee in.
Therefore, my dear son, I thee pray
Since it is so,
Here in this crib I might thee lay
Between these beasts two.
And I shall wrap thee, mine own dear child,
With such clothes as we have here.

JOSEPH

O Mary! behold these beasts so mild
Make lowing after their manner,
As they were men.
For sooth it seems well be their cheer
Their Lord they ken.

MARY

Their Lord they ken, that know I well.
They worship Him with might and main.
The weather is cold, as ye may feel.
To keep Him warm they are full fain
With their warm breath.
O! now sleeps my son, blessed may he be!
And lie full warm these beasts between.

JOSEPH

O! Now is fulfilled, for sooth I see
 What Abacuc of age hath said
 And preached by prophecy—
 He said our Saviour should find a bed
 Between two beasts.
 And now I see the same in sight.

MARY

Yea, Sir, for sooth the same is he.

JOSEPH

Honor and worship both day and night,
 Everlasting Lord, be done to thee,
 Always as is worthy.
 And, Lord, to thy service I render me
 With all mine heart wholly.

MARY

Thou merciful maker, most mighty,
 My God, my Lord, my Son so free
 Thy handmaiden for sooth am I.
 And to thy service I render me
 With all my heart's endeavor.
 Thy blessing, beseech I thee
 Thou grant us all forever.

[*The THREE SHEPHERDS come in and kneel.*]

FIRST SHEPHERD

Hail, thou comely and clean one! Hail, young Child!
 Hail, Maker, as I ween, of a maiden so mild!
 Thou hast harried, I ween, the fiend so wild,—
 The false beguiler now beguiled.

Lo, he merries,
 Lo, he laughs, my sweeting!
 A happy meeting!

Here's my promised greeting,—
Have a bob of cherries.

SECOND SHEPHERD

Hail, sovereign Saviour, for thou have we sought;
Hail, noble nursling and flower that all things hast
wrought;
Hail, thou full of gracious power, that made all from
naught;
Hail, I kneel and cower! A bird have I brought
To my Saviour from afar.
Hail, little tiny!
Of our creed thou art the prop.
I fain would drink in thy cup,
Little day star!

THIRD SHEPHERD

Hail, darling, dear one, full of Godhead, indeed,
I pray thee be near, when I have need.
Hail, sweet is thy cheer! My heart would bleed
To see thee sit here in so poor a weed,
With no pennies.
Hail; put forth thy dall,
I bring thee but a ball,
Keep it, and play with it withal
And go to the tennis.

MARY

The Father of Heaven this night, God Omnipotent,
That setteth all things aright, His Son hath he sent,
I conceived him forthright through his might as he meant.
And now he is born.
May he keep you from woe.
I shall pray him do so.

Tell it forth as ye go,
And remember this morn.

FIRST SHEPHERD

Farewell, Lady, so fair to behold,
With thy child on thy knee.

SECOND SHEPHERD

Lord, 'tis well with me! Now we go, behold!

THIRD SHEPHERD

Forsooth, already it seems to be told
Full oft.

FIRST SHEPHERD

What grace we have found.

SECOND SHEPHERD

Now are we won safe and sound.

THIRD SHEPHERD

Come forth, to sing are we bound.
Make it ring then aloft.

[The SHEPHERDS rise and go out.]

[The KINGS come in and kneel.]

FIRST KING

Hail be thou maker of everything
That help to all our sorrow may bring,
In token that thou art our King
And shall be ay,
Receive this gold as mine offering,
Prince, I thee pray.

SECOND KING

Hail, overcomer of king and knight!
Who formed fish and fowl in flight!
For thou art God's son most of might
And all ruling.
I bring thee incense, as is right,
As mine offering.

THIRD KING

Hail, king of kings, babe on knee!
Hail, onefold god in persons three!
In token that thou dead shall be
By power of men;
For thy burial this myrrh of me
Receive thou then.

MARY

Comfort, Sir Kings, and look that ye trow
That other lords are all below,
Both man and beast to him shall bow
On land and sea.
My blessing, sirs, be with you now
Where so ye be.

[*The KINGS go out slowly. Darkness.*]

SCENE VII

[*The KINGS enter slowly.*]

Lordings, we have travelled far
And of rest took we little care,
Therefore I say now, let us forbear
With all our main,

And find us a sleep here.

This would I fain.

[*They sleep. GABRIEL appears.*]

GABRIEL

Sir, courteous kings to me attend,
Go not the way ye would have went,
From God Himself am I sent
To warn you, as your faithful friend
How Herod has malice meant,
And plans your lives to end.
By other ways God wills ye wend
Into your own country.

[*Goes.*]

FIRST KING

Awake! Awake! Lordings dear,
Our dwelling is no longer here;
An angel spake to us all three,
Bade us, as friend,
That we should not on no manner
Home by Herod wend.

SECOND KING

Almighty God in trinity,
With heart entire thank I thee,
That thine angel sent told us three
And let us know
Our false friend for to flee,
That would us woe.

FIRST KING

We needs must part, sirs, parmafay!
All leave here by divers way.

This will me lead 'tis true to say
To my country,
Therefore, lordings, now have good day!
God with you be!

SECOND KING

Certes, I must pass by sea and sand
This is the gate, I understand,
That will lead unto my land
The right way.
To God of Heaven I you commend!
And have good day.

THIRD KING

This is the way that I must wend,
Now God to us his succour send
And He, that is without an end
And ay shall be,
Us from temptation's fiend defend
Most safely.

[*They go out. Darkness.*]

SCENE VIII

[*MARY and JOSEPH sleeping. GABRIEL appears.*]

GABRIEL

Awake, Joseph, and take intent,
Rise thou and sleep no more!
If thou wilt save thyself unharmed
Seek fast to fare.
I am an angel to thee sent,
For thou shalt suffer no harm,
To save thee from care.

If thou here longer spent,
Thou truly would repent
And rue it wonder sore.

JOSEPH

A! Mightyful God,
Whatever this meant,
In such sweet tone?

GABRIEL

Lo, Joseph, it is I,
An angel sent to thee.

JOSEPH

What! Then I pray thee why?
What is thy will with me?

GABRIEL

Hence it behooves thee hie,
And take with thee Mary,
Also her child so free.
All knave children shall die
Is Herod's decree, especially
Those that two years be
Of age.

JOSEPH

Alas, full of woe is me!
What is thy wisdom sage?

GABRIEL

To Egypt shalt thou fare
With all the might thou may,
And, Joseph, stay thou there
Till I thee other say.

JOSEPH

This is a sorry fare,
A sick man and a sore
To hear of such a fray;
I, certes, wished it were
Of my last day
The end.

GABRIEL

Thereof have thou no dread;
Go forth, all things to find,
The way He shall you lead,
The king of all mankind.

[*Goes.*]

MARY

Alas, full woe is me!
Is none so sad as I,
My heart would break in three,
My son to see him die.

JOSEPH

Nay! Dear Mary, let be,
And nothing dread thou thee,
But from hence let us hie,
To save this child so free.
Fast forth now let us flee,
Dear wife.
To meet with his enemy
It were a great mischief.

To Egypt let us fare,
This pack till I come there
I shall not cease to bear,

Therefore have thou no care.
God bless you most, I say,
And have now all good day!

[They go out. Darkness.]

THE NATIVITY

[THE CHANTILLY PLAY]

Translated and adapted by

EDUARDO SANCHEZ

and

DONALD FAY ROBINSON

Produced by the Harvard Dramatic Club, Dec. 16 and 17, 1924.

CAST

ANNOUNCER
MARY
JOSEPH
FIRST ANGEL
SECOND ANGEL
FIRST SHEPHERD
SECOND SHEPHERD
THIRD SHEPHERD
ELYSON
MAHAI
JASPAR
MELCHIOR
BALTHASAR
HEROD
MESSENGER
TWO COURTIERS
THREE CLERKS

CHANTS USED

Gloria in Excelsis
Adorate Deum
Omnes de Saba
Puer natus est nobis

THE NATIVITY

[THE CHANTILLY PLAY]

PROLOGUE

[*The ANNOUNCER steps before the audience, bows, and addresses them:*]

ANNOUNCER. For the glory of God the all powerful and of his mother Mary, queen of angels, we are about to begin a play to entertain this good assemblage. I beg of you humbly, most kind people, that you grant us a little silence till the end. And now you will see the play commence.

SCENE I

[*MARY enters above on the raised part of the stage and kneels. JOSEPH enters down right.*]

JOSEPH. Alas, noble lady! Thou art in need of something, as it seems to me. Thou art most beautiful and resplendent.

MARY. My father, the hour is now come when I am to give birth to my child.

JOSEPH. Noble lady, wouldst thou that I go seek the wise women, or any person to stay by thee?

MARY. My father, as at my child's conception no creature in the world was present, so none is needed at his birth. Do not be care ridden; do not be distressed. For my heavenly father will provide for everything.

[*Darkness.*]

THE NATIVITY

SCENE II

[When the lights come up again, MARY is discovered on the higher level by the manger gazing into it. JOSEPH stands down right looking up at MARY and the place where her CHILD lies.]

MARY. O sire, thou art welcome in the world, thou who art come from heaven unto earth for the salvation of men. O sire, how thou hast been cried out for by holy patriarchs and prophets. I adore thee as my creator, God and man, and my son, the Saviour of the world. O sire, how great grace hast thou shown me to have chosen me thy mother. My God and my creator art thou and my most dear son.

JOSEPH. Blessed above all women, suffer me to adore thy son and God's, him that has been so longed for.

MARY. My father, adore him at thy pleasure and as long even as thou wilt. *[JOSEPH kneels.]*

JOSEPH. O sire, blessed be Thou! How great grace hast thou shown me to let me see thee with my mortal eyes, when so many kings and patriarchs and prophets have so longed to see Thee and have not seen Thee as they wished. Alas! How shall I do that I may please Thee? I adore Thee as my creator, my God, and my redeemer.

[Rises.]

O noble, most happy lady, look to thy beloved Son! He sobs and cries for hunger and for cold and poverty. Alas, dear lady, what shalt thou do, since that thou hast no milk to give thy child? Wouldst thou that I should call some woman to come and suckle him?

MARY. No, in sooth. For God my father will care for everything.

O God my father, thou and I have an only child together. Do thou now, thou who providest all creatures

with their needs, provide for this little child that he may be nourished plentifully.

[*Darkness.*]

SCENE III

[*Three SHEPHERDS, one with a flute and all with Shepherd's crooks, and two sheperdesses, ELYSON and MAHAI, one with a little lamb and one with a basket of fruit lie in the foreground. TWO ANGELS appear on the upper level and address the SHEPHERDS who half rise to see these heavenly messengers.*]

1ST ANGEL. Most dear brethren and friends, be not afraid. Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day a Savior which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

2ND ANGEL. I announce to you besides great peace and glory. Born is the King, the Savior of the world. Go ye all unto Bethlehem without delay, an ye would learn better if this thing indeed be true.

1ST ANGEL. Today the King of Heaven has deigned to be born of the Virgin Mary, that those that were lost might be recalled to the celestial joy. Let us therefore rejoice, as the choirs of angels rejoice, for eternal salvation is come to mortal men. Verily a child is born to us, a son is given us, and is called God the Strong and the Mighty. Let us go then and adore him.

[*The TWO ANGELS disappear.*]

[*The choir chants Gloria in Excelsis. The SHEPHERDS rise and one among them speaks to the others.*]

1ST SHEPHERD. Most dear brethren, heard ye the angels that but now did bid our hearts rejoice? Let us go unto Bethlehem that we may know if this thing be true that the angels have told us, and learn what our Saviour has done and made manifest to us.

2ND SHEPHERD. Gladly and willingly will I go to learn the truth of the words which the angels have spoken. But I shall carry with me my flute, and I shall play upon it that I may comfort the little child who is God and Lord of all the world.

3RD SHEPHERD. And thou, my dear friend Elyson, thou shalt adore this little child, thou and thy comrade Mahai. She shall carry a lamb.

ELYSON. And gladly, most gentle brother. May God give thee good health this day. Here are nuts and apples in our basket which are left from our supper last night. And if thou hast a flute, thou wilt be a most gentle shepherd.

2ND SHEPHERD. And by heaven I have one!

ELYSON. And thou, Mistress Mahai, thou shalt take a plump lamb. We will leave our sheep here in the care of the little child.

MAHAI. Gladly, most gentle comrade. Let us go, we two together. We will let the good jolly shepherds go on before us. We will follow at a little distance to feast and cheer the mother of the child.

[They all go out, the men preceding. Darkness.]

SCENE IV

[The lights come up, showing MARY sitting and JOSEPH standing, one on either side of the manger. The SHEPHERDS and SHEPHERDESSES enter down stage, group about

down front, and kneel. Then the FIRST SHEPHERD, who has not knelt, speaks.]

1ST SHEPHERD. Know, noble lady, and thou who art protector of the child, that the angels of heaven have announced to us that the true son of God is come to earth in human flesh. He is the Savior of all the world and by his great mercy we shall all be saved. We are come to adore him.

[He too kneels. The choir chants Puer Natus est nobis.]

[The 2ND SHEPHERD presents his flute, MAHAI the lamb, ELYSON the basket of apples. Then they all bow their heads in prayer and afterwards rise together. The FIRST SHEPHERD turns to the audience and addresses them.]

1ST SHEPHERD. Hearken, most kind people. We tell you a most certain truth. We have seen him who is born the Savior of the world lying in a manger and crying full piteously. By his great mercy we shall all be saved. We have seen this child. Hay he hath for his little bed. Such is his humility.

[Darkness.]

SCENE V

[JASPAR, MELCHIOR, and BALTHASAR, each bearing his gift, enter from right, left, and center and meet. They bow one to another.]

JASPAR. *[To MELCHIOR.]* O my lord king, whence do you come, and what is your land and country? What has led you hither? Tell me at once.

MELCHIOR. I am acquainted with the word of scripture which says, a star shall rise out of Jacob, a son shall come to us out of Israel who shall hold in his hand all the king-

doms of the earth. Know that I am of a royal city, which is called the city of Tarsus and that I am called Melchior and am of great renown.

JASPAR. [*To BALTHASAR.*] And you, O my lord king, wherefore do you come and with so great a following? Your name and your country you can tell me if you will?

BALTHASAR. Know, my lords, that my name is Balthasar and that I am crowned king of the city of Saba. I saw a star which appeared in the sky and it has led me hither to find the sovereign king that is newly born.

MELCHIOR. [*To JASPAR.*] O my lord, if it please you, we would be glad to know your name, and from what land and region you are and of what nation?

JASPAR. My name, sirs, will I tell you gladly, nor shall I lie to you. I am of the name of Jaspar and am of Arabia. Many days have I journeyed. Know you, that I have no other wish than to adore the newborn king.

BALTHASAR. O my most noble sirs, since it is that thus the high king of majesty has assembled us here all three to find the newborn Savior of the world, humbly I pray you, and great will be my joy therein, that we go together to adore him.

[*They go out together. Darkness.*]

SCENE VI

[*HEROD enters on the upper level. He claps his hands to summon the MESSENGER who enters down left.*]

HEROD. Haste thee, my messenger : speak to me, and deny me not.

MESSENGER. What is your will my sweet lord? Loyalty

and honor I owe you. Tell me your desire and I will fulfil it promptly.

HEROD. Say to my clerks that they shall come and speak with me, all of them, nor shall they delay at all. A question I wish to put to them that is very displeasing to me.

MESSENGER. I go, my lord. Bide but a little time. [*He bows and turns down left where he meets the THREE CLERKS entering and addresses them.*]

MESSENGER. Reverend sirs and most noble masters, Herod our king has business with you. He sends to you by me his worthy salutation. A terrible thing has come to his ears. Wherefore he begs that you go to him. To you he will tell and relate it all.

1ST CLERK. We go to him most gladly for we are in readiness to obey him.

[*They step before HEROD. The MESSENGER stands to one side. The CLERKS bow.*]

HEROD. Tell me where Jesus Christ shall be born, he who is to be lord and master of the world.

1ST CLERK. Now hear, most potent king. I shall tell you in truth of the child of whom you now ask. Know, noble and worthy lord, that he shall be born in Bethlehem, close by to Jerusalem. And this we find in the writings which the prophets have left us.

[*HEROD dismisses the CLERKS with a curt nod. Then he turns to address the PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM who are invisible at one side of the stage.*]

HEROD. Now harken, my well-loved people. I hear of a thing most marvelous. For according to the word of my clerks another king is to be lord and master and is now born in Bethlehem. So it is said throughout Jerusalem. I bid you farewell, my people. Scarce can I keep from weep-

ing for very grief. I shall no longer govern you. This grieves me. Farewell, my people!

[HEROD *bows his head. Then he turns abruptly and addresses the MESSENGER harshly.*]

HEROD. Now come hither, my messenger. Great need is come upon me.

MESSENGER. [*Coming to him.*] Most respected and puissant king, what is your wish? Tell me it.

HEROD. Go and lead hither the kings. Tell them that they shall come and speak with me.

MESSENGER. At your command, most noble prince, I go at once. [*He turns down left and meets the KINGS entering.*]

MESSENGER. Know, lord kings, that Herod our king and sire greets you through me. Humbly as is due a king, and with great love, I pray you that you please to come with light heart to speak with him.

JASPAR. Most willingly shall we do his will all three. At once and gladly will we speak with him, for we have tidings for him.

[*The KINGS step up before HEROD and bow. The MESSENGER goes out.*]

JASPAR. God keep you, my lord, and give you good day today.

HEROD. You are welcome, my good and loyal lords. [*To JASPAR.*] How, my lord, is it with you? Whence come you into this land? Tell me, if you please, your name, and what your country is and your kingdom.

JASPAR. I come hither from my land and a right long road have I traveled. But with the aid of God I have ar-

rived in twelve days. My name is called Jaspar, and Arabia is my city.

HEROD. [*To MELCHIOR.*] O noble lord king, turn and speak to me. I pray you lovingly that I may know your name and truly. Your city and your country you can tell me if you will?

MELCHIOR. Know, Herod, my friend, that my lands and kingdom are far distant from this city. But with the aid of God I have arrived here. Melchior is my name, and I am from Tarsus, a noble region.

HEROD. [*To BALTHASAR.*] O most gentle lord king, harken and speak to me. Humbly I beseech you that you please to tell me your name and your country. For I perceive full well that you are weary with journeying.

BALTHASAR. My lord, most noble king! Since it is your pleasure to know the whole truth concerning my name and being, most willingly will I tell you and in good faith. I was born and am crowned king in the city of Saba, which is a most noble kingly city. It is twelve days since I departed from my land, soothly I say it. I am sore weary with journeying, for I am come from a far country. And my name is everywhere well known: I am called Balthasar.

HEROD. Ah, my most noble lord kings, now I know well that you do not know the roads. Tell me, what has led you hither, and why you have undertaken so far a journey.

JASPAR. We are right good astronomers and we understand well the holy writ. From which we have certain knowledge that the king of kings is born in Bethlehem.

HEROD. Blessed be the great God who puts you today in good hands.

[The TWO COURTIERs, bearing the table with four goblets on it, enter. They set the table down before HEROD and then come down front to one side.]

HEROD. Now let us eat and drink and make good cheer in honor of the newborn king. For I too wish to go and adore.

[They drink.]

HEROD. How have you come, all three, from your far countries?

JASPAR. Know, Herod, kind king, that there appeared to us a star whereby we knew that the king of kings was born.

1ST COURTIER. *[To 2ND COURTIER.]* Why are these kings come with so great company and following? What is it that they say? Are they mad? They speak of another king.

2ND COURTIER. We know full well that there is no other king than our good lord Herod, who is king of all the world.

1ST COURTIER. And if I knew now that there was another king, I should kill him at once, for he should not rule over my master.

HEROD. O most noble loyal lords! I beseech you that you tarry here today and please to sup with me, you and your company and following. I will give you good cheer, for I am most glad to see you.

JASPAR. Thanks be to God and you, my lord. But we shall make no further delay here. The day is far spent, and we have yet a long way to go.

MELCHIOR. Know, noble Lord, that it is not for lack of love that we depart so soon. Your company is most sweet. But it is because of the great desire and love that we bear for the new king.

BALTHASAR. It is right that we now depart. The day is far spent. Let us hasten, my dear lords, for we have no time to delay.

HEROD. Go, my lords, to Bethlehem and inquire after the new king. When you shall find him, I pray you in great humility that you return this way. You may make known that which you have done, and we can then assemble to adore the little king.

JASPAR. Sire, your behest will we do gladly and with light heart. If nothing else detains us we will willingly return through your kingdom.

[*The THREE KINGS go one way, HEROD another. Darkness.*]

SCENE VII

[*The KINGS enter together.*]

JASPAR. Did you indeed hear and understand what the courtiers were saying? I heard them but did not fully understand.

MELCHIOR. Know in truth, my lords, that I heard them say that if they could find the little king they would kill him.

BALTHASAR. Well did I understand them and I saw indeed by their manner that they are no friends of ours; nor is their king, I assure you, albeit he has given us good cheer.

JASPAR. [*Pointing.*] This star betokens the birth of a great king. Let us go and seek him and offer him our gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

O sovereign God, father all powerful, we pray thee and humbly beseech thee that thou give us thy grace and blessing, that we may see and adore thy dear son, and that we may at the end of our days attain salvation.

[*They go out. Darkness.*]

SCENE VIII

[MARY and JOSEPH on the upper level on either side of the manger. The THREE KINGS enter.]

JASPAR. Lady, dost thou not know where he is who is born king of the Jews? We come to adore him.

MARY. Lords, that thing the learned and powerful of this city may know in every truth.

JASPAR. O Lady, hast thou not then a child?

MARY. Lords, I have one by the grace of the Holy Ghost.

JASPAR. Most dear lady, tell us in truth, it is a long time since he was born?

MARY. Lords, it is today the thirteenth day since he was born.

JASPAR. Noble lady, we beseech thee humbly that thou please to show us thy child.

MARY. Lords, I hold here in my lap the Son of God and my child. It is he who shall succor all the world.

JASPAR. Lady, great thanks to thee! Never have I seen a more beautiful child. Lady, what is his name?

MARY. Jesus is his name.

BALTHASAR. O Savior of the world, thou art welcome! O sire, how great is thy humility. For it has pleased thee to come into this wretched world and to be born in a lowly stable. Thou who art infinite in divinity, hast wished to confine thyself in human flesh. Thou who art creator hast wished to become a creature. Thou who art immortal hast wished to become mortal. O Jesus, son of God, thou art welcome! For by thy grace are we here assembled together to adore thee.

JASPAR. O my lord King of Tarsus, it is fitting that you adore him first, and that we go after in humility.

MELCHIOR. Nay, not I. O valiant king of Arabia, most mighty by your nobility and dignity! You first should make the offering.

BALTHAZAR. Ay, you offer first, O king of Arabia, for full great is your desire.

JASPAR. Since, my lords, such is your wish. Myrrh will I offer in full quantity.

[JASPAR *steps up before the holy family and kneels to offer his gift. The choir sings the Adorate Deum. JASPAR remains kneeling.*]

BALTHASAR. [*To MELCHIOR.*] You shall go next, lord, for such is your dignity. Your name and your great age are known throughout the world.

MELCHIOR. Gladly, lord king of Saba, of frankincense will I make him offering.

[MELCHIOR *kneels and offers. The choir sings the Adorate Deum again.*]

BALTHASAR. And now that you have offered him frankincense, I shall present to him with good will gold in great plenty. Then let us start upon our homeward journey.

[BALTHASAR *kneels and offers his gift. The choir sings Omnes de Saba. Then the THREE KINGS rise and bow.*]

JASPAR. [*To JOSEPH.*] O noble man and of great holiness, tell us a little of this child's birth, for we know truly that he is a king newborn, and we come from far to worship him.

JOSEPH. Know, my most kind lords, that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, who has made manifest his grace in him.

MELCHIOR. O my dear friend, when he was born, where was he placed?

JOSEPH. In the manger, in hay, for want of a cradle.

BALTHASAR. O God, where is thy kingly hall and thy chamberlains who should hasten in Thy service? We should indeed despise ourselves, for our creator is so poorly placed. We have great riches, and our King lies in a manger.

JASPAR. [*To MARY.*] Now farewell, most gentle lady. To thee we commend our bodies and our souls.

MELCHIOR. Farewell, sweet Jesus! It grieves me that I can no longer tarry.

BALTHASAR. Farewell, noble sovereign lady, who art mother of this exalted king. Farewell to you all and be ye blessed of God.

MARY. God the Father will be with you and will lead you all three even unto the gate of salvation.

[*The KINGS turn to go and the FIRST ANGEL appears in the way.*]

1ST ANGEL. Hear, lord kings! Harken and speak to me. Beware when ye shall go and return ye not unto Herod, for if he can reach you, he will have you put to death.

JASPAR. Praise be to the God of majesty who hath preserved us from death!

[*They go out. Darkness.*]

EPILOGUE

[*The ANNOUNCER steps forward, bows, and addresses the audience.*]

ANNOUNCER. O you who have wished to hear our play and our entertainment, we beg of you humbly that you please to be of kind heart. If there is anything to condemn, we beg that you will pardon us for it. For we have not wished to try to do anything displeasing to anyone alive. So I pray to our Lord Jesus Christ that he keep the whole assemblage, and let us dwell in peace, that we may at last enter into his glory. God and Saint Mary grant us this! So be of kind heart, I beseech you.

[He bows and disappears.]

THE BENEDIKTBEUREN PLAY

Translated and adapted by

DONALD FAY ROBINSON

Prologue adapted by

PROFESSOR KUNO FRANCKE

Produced by the Harvard Dramatic Club, Dec. 16 and 17, 1925.

CAST

ST. AUGUSTINE

ISAIAH

AARON

SIBYL

HIGH PRIEST

TWO MESSENGERS

MARY

ELIZABETH

FOUR ANGELS

THREE KINGS

THREE SHEPHERDS

DEVIL

JOSEPH

HEROD

CHANTS USED

Creator Alme Siderum

Sanctus

Pange Lingua

Magnificat

THE BENEDIKTBEUREN PLAY

PROLOGUE

[ST. AUGUSTINE *stands centre. Enter with* ISAIAH, AARON *and* SIBYL *at his right, HIGH PRIEST and TWO JEWS at his left.*]

ISAIAH. [*Steps forward.*] I, Isaiah, speak thus: A virgin shall bring forth God. The world shall be cleansed of sin. Rejoice, O Israel, in the coming Godhead, and flee from the blindness of thy ways.

AARON. [*Steps forward.*] I, Aaron, speak thus: O Israel, dwelling in darkness, recover thy sight, rejoice in thy King to be born from a maiden. As this barren rod flowered forth, so shall a virgin bear.

SIBYL. [*With lively gesture coming forward.*] I, the Sibyl, speak thus: This star is a messenger of mighty joy. From the heavens shall descend a heavenly Son to bless the womb of her who has been chosen to purge us from our guilt. From the heavens shall descend a great King who shall make a covenant between God and man.

HIGH PRIEST. [*Coming forward, suave and sneering.*] Tell me, Augustine, what do these idiots prattle about? I, the High Priest, know these are falsehoods. Does a camel spring from an ox? Does a mountain stream flow backward? Does a wolf flee from a lamb? And a maiden should give birth to God?

ST. AUGUSTINE. [*Solemnly.*] Open thine ears, O Israel, open thine ears! I, St. Augustine, tell thee: the Prophets and the Sibyl are right. As the sun shines through a

crystal without staining it, so the Godhead will pass through virginity without destroying it. And the world shall be saved. Believe, O Israel, believe the wondrous message. Open thine ears!

HIGH PRIEST. I deny, I deny!

ST. AUGUSTINE. Believe, believe!

HIGH PRIEST. I deny!

ST. AUGUSTINE. If thine ears, O Israel, are closed to the message, if thy reason is clogged, then open thine eyes to the fact, and sight will convince thee. Thou shalt see! Open thine eyes! Thou shalt see!

[*Darkness. The singers chant one stanza of the Creator alme siderum.*]

SCENE I

[*MARY in door kneeling. Enter ANGEL.*]

ANGEL. Hail, Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee! Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

MARY. How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man?

ANGEL. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.

MARY. Behold the hand-maiden of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word.

[*Lights out on tableau.*]

SCENE II

[*ELIZABETH up left. MARY down right. Tableau centre.*]

ELIZABETH. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. [*ELIZABETH kneels.*]

MARY. My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever.

[*Lights out.*]

SCENE III

[*Chant throughout: Sanctus.*]

[*Tableau centre. JOSEPH and MARY by the manger. The ANGEL stands down left, gazing at the holy family.*]

ANGEL. Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

[*Darkness.*]

SCENE IV

[*The THREE KINGS enter from divers directions, meeting at centre. They gaze down right at the invisible star.*]

FIRST KING. I have learned the courses and natures of the stars, and I remember studying through the number of them. But when I look on this, I marvel greatly, for none of old can compare with it.

SECOND KING. That comet which you look upon, and which shines so far, and which turns the other stars to paleness, proclaims that a king is born, than whom no greater shall come, and whose nod the whole world shall yield to and obey.

THIRD KING. Therefore let us go together with our gifts; and where the star leads us, thither let us direct our steps, that when we shall see him who we hope is born, we who are kings also may offer him our gifts.

[*They go down right as FIRST KING speaks.*]

FIRST KING. Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him.

[*Darkness.*]

SCENE V

[*The THREE KINGS enter down right, meeting the TWO MESSENGERS who enter down left. Tableau.*]

FIRST MESSENGER. O you who wear the garments and insignia of kings, make known to us wherefore you come; and if you have a message to tell, which you seek to bear to the ears of the king, know that we are the servants and deputies of Herod. To him often come messengers from foreign lands in haste. At the palace nothing is kept secret from us. Therefore we may know the matter of your business.

SECOND KING. We do not wish to hide what we seek. That star we look on proclaims it. We seek the king that is born of whom that star tells, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

SECOND MESSENGER. This news will come opportunely to Herod's ears, and gladly will he hear this message from a king. That he may therefore learn first from us of this joy, follow you our footsteps at a little distance.

[*They go off down left, first MESSENGERS then KINGS.*]

SCENE VI

[HEROD *enters and stands centre. The MESSENGERS enter down left after a slight pause; one comes to down right and they bow before HEROD.*]

FIRST MESSENGER. King Herod, learn of a wonder that three kings now come to announce to you. They come to worship a king that is born and to whom the whole world shall be subjugate.

HEROD. [*With great indignation.*] How dare you tell such things to the king? We counsel you, do not invent lies. Are we not Herod, and powerful to overcome whatever the world holds, or the sky, or the earth, or the sea?—Summon hither the High Priest, he who is ever fruitful

of counsel, that he may confer with us on this affair. And we will command that you be put to torture if the discussion prove you fools.

[MESSENGERS *go off down right. The HIGH PRIEST enters with great hauteur down right, followed by the MESSENGERS.*]

HEROD. You, sir, we address. Let the others pay heed. Rumor of bad news gnaws at our vitals. Hither come three kings, well read in the stars, who hasten to the birth of an all powerful child.

HIGH PRIEST. [*With great wisdom and eloquence.*] Bide not, O Lord, at this parting of the ways of care. Let the three kings come in search of the child. With studious diligence play the friend to them, and veiling your thoughts in love, address them on this wise :

[*Enter the THREE KINGS down left.*]

"You are kings, we see, as your garb proclaims. That you journey through our land is a pleasure to us. But what brings you hither? Tell us all, for we are at your service in all things."

THIRD KING. A new star shines as herald of the birth of him whom the world shall obey, and who shall be king of all, and without whose grace nothing can stand. Bearing these gifts we travel to him.

HEROD. Do not let us stand in the way of your life's goal. Go, and return to us after in due season, that we too may go and bear such gifts as we ought to him to whom the whole world shall be subject.

[*Tableau. Darkness.*]

SCENE VII

[*Semi-darkness. The THREE SHEPHERDS lie asleep on steps left. The ANGEL enters up right, in a flood of light. The SHEPHERDS half rise.*]

ANGEL. I announce to you, O shepherds, a great joy. God has clad himself in flesh as in a garment. Sinless shall she be who bears him, and forever a virgin shall she be who is the mother of this child.

[*The DEVIL enters down right in the half darkness.*]

DEVIL. Do not believe such things, O simple shepherds. You know it is foolishness and that truth cannot prove it. That deity should thus be hidden in a manger proclaims itself a lie.

FIRST SHEPHERD. What do you understand, my brother, from these things that we hear? What voice insinuates that a child is born against the use of nature? From this I gather that what we hear is mixed with falsehood.

ANGEL. Why do you not turn your ears to this message of truth? Who is this crafty one that leads you astray? Lest error turn you into the path of the enemy, go, for what I proclaim the manger will prove true.

DEVIL. O most simple race, and wounded in understanding! The manger holds hay and fodder to nourish cows. Will deity lying in a manger dine on such? You show yourselves utter fools to believe such things.

FIRST SHEPHERD. Listen again, brother, what contradiction! Here I hear one thing and there I hear the contrary. My simple spirit and untrained mind know not what can indeed be the meaning of such things.

[*The ANGEL goes up right. DEVIL down right. SHEPHERDS go slowly down left. Darkness.*]

SCENE VIII

[The chorus chants one verse of the Pange Lingua, so timed as to reach the end as the SHEPHERDS kneel. MARY sitting with CHILD in her arms. JOSEPH kneels right centre. FOUR ANGELS stand in back, the FIRST ANGEL at the extreme left. Tableau.]

FIRST ANGEL. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

[The SHEPHERDS enter and pause down left. Each bears his offering.]

FIRST SHEPHERD. My heart yearns when I hear that voice, and because of it I have within me a singing joy. Let us therefore go on together to the manger and on bent knees let us adore the child.

[The SHEPHERDS kneel on the steps left. Then the KINGS enter down right.]

FIRST KING. Shepherds, tell, what have you seen that you proclaim that Christ is born?

FIRST SHEPHERD. We have seen the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and choirs of angels praising the saviour.

[The KINGS kneel on the steps right. The choir begins the Magnificat which they repeat over and over with a gradual crescendo to the end of the play. The SHEPHERDS and then the KINGS offer each a gift. The SHEPHERDS go down left. The FIRST ANGEL comes a little way forward left.]

ANGEL. Do not return to Herod, for if he find you he will kill you.

[The KINGS go slowly down right. The ANGEL then addresses JOSEPH who rises.]

ANGEL. Arise, and take the young child and his mother,

and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word.

[MARY rises.]

MARY. I am a mother and prepared to suffer all hardships and all dangers, so that my son escape them. I go, and thou shalt go with me.

[TWO ANGELS come down right. One joins the FIRST ANGEL to left. The ANGELS to the right precede MARY and JOSEPH, the ANGELS to the left follow, and all go down right. Darkness. The Magnificat comes to an end.]

THE WISEMEN

[THE SPANISH PLAY]

Translated and adapted by

DAVID FAY ROBINSON

Produced by the Harvard Dramatic Club, Dec. 16 and 17, 1926.

CAST

CASPAR

MELCHIOR

BALTHASAR

HEROD'S MESSENGER

HEROD

HIGH PRIEST

SECOND PRIEST

HEROD'S SON

TWO MIDWIVES

MARY

JOSEPH

GABRIEL

COMPANY OF LEARNED AT HEROD'S COURT

CHANTS USED

Hodie Christus natus est

Sanctus

Kyrie Eleison

THE WISEMEN

[THE SPANISH PLAY]

[*After the lights are put out, the hidden choir sings* Hodie Christus natus est. *Then:*]

SCENE I

[*Half light. The FIRST WISEMAN stands centre gazing down right up at the unseen star.*]

FIRST WISEMAN. God Creator! What a miracle! I know not what yon star is. Now have I seen it for the first time, a short while since it appeared. Born is the creator who is Lord of the peoples! [*Pause.*] It is not true. I know not what I say. All that is not worth a fig! Another night shall I examine it. If it be true, then shall I indeed know it. [*Pause.*] Indeed what I say is true. I insist absolutely that it is so. It can be no other sign. This it is and is not otherwise. God in truth is born of woman in this month of December. I shall go thither; wheresoever he be, I shall adore him. I shall hold him to be God of all. [*Exit down right.*]

[*Pause. The SECOND WISEMAN enters centre, gazing toward the star.*]

SECOND WISEMAN. I know not whence this star cometh, who beareth it, nor who holdeth it. Wherefore is this sign? Never in my days did I see the like. Indeed there is born on earth he who in peace and in war shall be lord of all from the east even unto the west. For three nights shall I

watch it; then shall I know more truly concerning it. [*Pause.*] Surely, surely is he born. I know not if I have seen anything. I shall go and adore him and pray him and beseech him. [*Exit down right.*]

[*Pause. The THIRD WISEMAN enters down left, gazing at the star.*]

THIRD WISEMAN. Hail! Creator! Never at any time before was such a thing observed or found in scripture. There is no such star in heaven. I know, for I am a good astrologer. Indeed do I see, nor do I mock thereat, that a man is born of flesh that is lord of all the world, even as the heavens are vaulted. Of all the peoples shall he be lord, and he shall judge over the generation. [*Pause.*] I doubt more if this be true. No such happening is told of that ever came to pass. I shall watch it again to see if it be true or if it be not. [*Pause.*] Born is the creator, master of all the peoples. Indeed I see it, that it is true. Thither shall I go in love. [*Exit down right.*]

SCENE II

[*Half light. The THREE WISEMAN enter from divers directions.*]

FIRST WISEMAN. God save you, sirs! Are ye astrologers? Tell me in truth, I wish to know it of you, do ye follow yon star?

SECOND WISEMAN. I do in sooth. Even from Arabia have I followed it.

THIRD WISEMAN. And I. In Saba did I perceive it. It has led me hither.

FIRST WISEMAN. In Tarsus the great city did it appear to me. Then I bethought me of the prophet Balaam, who said the token of the birth of the creator is a star. Born

is the creator who is lord of the peoples. I go to adore him.

SECOND WISEMAN. I likewise shall beseech him.

THIRD WISEMAN. Lords, to what land, where do ye wish to go? Do ye wish to go with me to implore the creator? Have ye seen him? I go to adore him.

FIRST WISEMAN. We likewise go, if we can find him.

SECOND WISEMAN. Let us follow the star. We shall see the place where he lies.

FIRST WISEMAN. How can we prove if he be a mortal man or if he be king of earth or if of heaven?

SECOND WISEMAN. Do ye wish indeed to know how we shall know it? Gold, myrrh, and frankincense shall we offer him. If he is king of earth, he will want the gold. If he is mortal man, he will take the myrrh. If he is king of heaven, these two he will leave, he will take the incense that pertains to him.

THIRD WISEMAN. Let us go and let us do thus.

[Exeunt down right.]

SCENE III

[Full light. The THREE WISEMEN enter down left, meeting the MESSENGER who enters down right.]

MESSENGER. Who are ye strange kings that thus unheralded travel through the land? Herod the mighty king commands you come before him.

FIRST WISEMAN. What king is he, this Herod, whom thou so reverest?

MESSENGER. He who is lord of all the world and of all the

seas thereof and the lands and peoples. No man but fears him and bows him to his will.

SECOND WISEMAN. Lead us before this so great and powerful king.

[*Exeunt down right.*]

SCENE IV

[*Light full up. HEROD centre. Enter MESSENGER down right.*]

MESSENGER. Hail, great my king! O live forever, O thou who art lord of earth and sea and sky!

HEROD. What tidings bear'st thou?

MESSENGER. The three that thou bad'st me bring before thee are come unto thee.

HEROD. Let them come before me.

[*The MESSENGER goes down right. The WISEMEN enter and bow.*]

FIRST WISEMAN. The creator preserve thee! God cure thee of ill!

SECOND WISEMAN. A little shall we tell thee. We do not seek thee else.

THIRD WISEMAN. God give thee long life and cure thee of ill.

FIRST WISEMAN. We go in pilgrimage to adore that king who is born on earth, but we cannot find him.

HEROD. What do ye say? Where do ye go? For whom do ye go to seek? From what land do ye come? Whither do ye wish to go? Tell me your names, nor try to hide them from me.

FIRST WISEMAN. From Tarsus we come, and from Arabia, and Saba. Kings are we of those lands. Me they call Caspar. This one is Melchior. And that one is Balthasar. King, a king is born who is lord of the earth, who shall rule over the generation in great peace without war.

HEROD. Is this so in sooth?

FIRST WISEMAN. Yes, king, it is, by charity!

HEROD. And how do ye know it? And have ye proved it?

SECOND WISEMAN. King, we tell thee in truth that we have proved it. A great miracle it is. A star has appeared and it gives token that he is born and come in human flesh.

HEROD. When and at what time did ye see it and when did ye perceive it?

THIRD WISEMAN. Thirteen days it is, nor is it more, since we have seen it and have well perceived it.

HEROD. Then go ye and seek and adore him. And return this way: I shall go thither and adore him.

[*The WISEMEN go out down left.*]

HEROD. [*Alone.*] Whoever saw such ill! Above the king another king! I am not yet dead nor put under the earth! Another over me! I never saw the like. The times are going to the dogs! Indeed I know not what I shall do. Forsooth! I do not believe it until I see it! Let come my majordomo who cares for my possessions.

[*The MESSENGER comes in down right.*]

HEROD. Go for my abbots and my princes and my scribes and my grammarians and my astrologers and my rhetoricians. They shall tell me in sooth if this be in scripture or if they know it or if they have known of it.

[*A motley COMPANY OF LEARNED enter down right and down left.*]

HIGH PRIEST. King, what is thy pleasure? Behold we are come.

HEROD. And bear ye your writings?

HIGH PRIEST. Ay, king! We bear the best that we have.

HEROD. Then examine them. Tell me the truth if this man is born of whom the three kings have told me. Tell, Rabbi, the truth if thou knowest it.

HIGH PRIEST. In sooth I say to thee, the scripture hath naught of this nor shall it have.

HEROD. By allah, what a fool art thou become! Wherefore art thou proclaimed rabbi? Knowest thou not the prophecies which Jeremiah spake?

[*Pause and slight commotion.*]

HIGH PRIEST. [*To his followers.*] By the law, we have made a mistake. Why are we not in accord? Why should we not tell him the truth?

SECOND PRIEST. By charity, I know it not! For we are not schooled in this matter, nor hath it been in our mouths.

HEROD. Ye know it not! Wherefore have ye studied the writings of the prophets? Wherefore do ye stand up to teach my people, ye who know it not? Prevaricate no more, but tell me, is this child born of whom the wise-man spake?—Give me the books. I myself will read that which ye dare not.

HIGH PRIEST. My lord, read not. The sayings of the prophets concerning this cannot be true.

HEROD. Fool! Wouldst even deny God? Give me the books. [*He takes them and reads.*] "But thou, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth that is to be ruler in Israel." [*He throws the volume on the ground.*]

[*Those about him shrink back.*]

HEROD. Ye cowardly swine! How dare ye so to fawn and yelp like whipped dogs and beasts? Tell unto me what I shall do in this matter. How shall I destroy this child?

[*HEROD'S SON appears down left and salutes his father.*]

SON. Hail, imperial father! Hail, eminent king, who rulest everywhere by the sway of thy royal sceptre!

HEROD. Most loving son, worthy of the gift of praise, winning the pomp of kingly glory by thy name, a king is born stronger than we and more powerful: I fear lest he drive us from the lands of our kingdom.

SON. Against this little king, against this child that is born, command, father, thy son to go to battle. Send soldiers with me to Bethlehem, even to all the coasts thereof. All men children shall we put to death who are under two years old. Surely shall this king be among them.

HEROD. Most sagely hast thou counseled, O my son. Great wit hast thou, O noble seed of my loins. Even as thou hast said shall it be done. Go with thy soldiers unto Bethlehem. Not one child among them shalt thou spare. Am I not king? Go.

[*HEROD'S SON leads the SOLDIERS out down left. The OTHER ADVISERS go down right, leaving HEROD alone. Darkness.*]

SCENE V

[*Half light. The background is closed off. The MID-WIVES stand before the door. The THREE KINGS enter down left.*]

FIRST WISEMAN. Behold the star! Again it leads us on-

ward. We shall not cease to follow till we are come to where he lies who is lord of all the world.

SECOND WISEMAN. O thou creator who with thine hand hast made heaven and earth and sea as a home for man, show us thy son who is born and who shall be lord of the peoples!

THIRD WISEMAN. Behold, the star moves no longer. See how it is still, shining above yon shed. Forsooth must the creator lie there.

FIRST WISEMAN. Who are those women that stand before the door? Surely they shall know something concerning this miracle.

[*They approach.*]

SECOND WISEMAN. O ye most noble women, know ye indeed where he lies who is the lord of the world?

FIRST MIDWIFE. Who are ye who come thus in the garb of kings, and what strange things are they that ye bear with you?

THIRD WISEMAN. We are kings of Tarsus and Arabia and Saba. Following yon star, we seek the creator who is born on earth of a virgin. Say, know ye where he lies?

SECOND MIDWIFE. What will ye of him?

FIRST WISEMAN. Gold we bear and frankincense and myrrh. Kings, we are come to adore the king of kings, if we can find him.

FIRST MIDWIFE. Behold, he whom ye seek is here.

[*The MIDWIVES open the door, revealing MARY with the CHILD in her arms and JOSEPH at her side. Lights come up full.*]

FIRST WISEMAN. Hail, Prince of the ages!

SECOND WISEMAN. Hail, Prince of the ages!

THIRD WISEMAN. Hail, Prince of the ages!

[*The KINGS bow to adore. The choristers chant the Sanctus. After this is sung through, the WISEMEN speak.*]

FIRST WISEMAN. O God creator, born of woman for the sins of man, be thou praised eternally! Thy palace and thy royal equipage hast thou denied, and to a lowly stable art thou come naked, that man may be freed from the doom of hell. Accept, O king, in token of thy kingdom, this gift of gold.

SECOND WISEMAN. O God creator who art come to earth clad in the flesh of man, be thou loved forever! Since thou art God, thou hast assumed the form of thy creature man, that thou mayst show to him the humility of the boundlessly mighty. Accept, O God, in token of thy godhead, this gift of frankincense.

THIRD WISEMAN. O God creator, who art made incarnate out of love for man, be thy glory unending! Thou art come to earth to suffer and to be crucified by man that man may live. Accept, O Lord, in token of thy manhood, this gift of myrrh.

MARY. Be ye thanked, O ye foreign faithful, come hither from your far kingdoms for love of Christ. The gold he takes, for he is indeed king. The myrrh he takes, for he is become man. But the frankincense doth he accept with especial love, for he is God.

FIRST WISEMAN. Say, O mother of God, when was he born?

MARY. It is thirteen days, nor is it more, since I gave him birth.

SECOND WISEMAN. Tell us, O bride of God, what is his name?

MARY. Even as the angel that spake to me hath said, is he named Jesus.

THIRD WISEMAN. Speak, O star of the sea, how shall we return home, for thither must we now go, whether by Herod or by a secret way?

MARY. The God whom ye adore shall be your guide. Even he shall guide you hence who hath led you hither. Go ye in safety and holiness and love.

[*The ANGEL appears behind MARY, glistening bright against the darkness.*]

ANGEL. Go not toward Herod, for he is enraged against you. Return by divers ways in safety to your lands.

[*The chorus starts the Kyrie Eleison. The WISEMEN go out slowly down left.*]

ANGEL. Joseph, take Mary and the child and flee. Even to Egypt shalt thou go, for Herod sendeth soldiers to slay the child. There shalt thou bide until I be sent to thee. Arise, O guardian of God, and go.

[*MARY bearing the CHILD and JOSEPH slowly out down right. The ANGEL stands resplendent and alone.*]

ANGEL. Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to men!

[*A moment longer the ANGEL stands there. Then the lights go out and the Kyrie sounds out to a rich end from the darkness.*]

THE PROVENÇAL PLAY

Translated and adapted by

DONALD FAY ROBINSON

Produced by the Harvard Dramatic Club, December 19 and 20,
1927.

CAST

GABRIEL
ABIATHAR, the High Priest
ABRAHAM
SOLOMON
MARY
ISAAC
LEVI
MICAH
THE ENVIOUS ONE
JOSEPH
MARY'S HANDMAIDENS
ELIZABETH
ZACHARY
HOST
ANATASIA
TWO SHEPHERDS
SHEPHERDS, JEWS

CHANTS USED

Adorate Deum
Sanctus
Gloria in Excelsis
Hodie Christus natus est

THE PROVENÇAL PLAY

SCENE I

[*The dignitaries and populace are gathered together about the HIGH PRIEST ABIATHAR who stands at the centre of the stage. ABRAHAM, SOLOMON, ISAAC, LEVI, MICAH, and others are in the crowd. Suddenly, from one side, down front, GABRIEL appears and addresses them, standing three-quarters back to the audience.*]

GABRIEL. Hear all ye that are come together here, both rich and poor, both great and small! God commands that ye give in wedlock a maiden that is among you, and sends you a certain one of the lords of the land as her spouse and her compainion, a noble man of your race, and, as is well fitting, of the root and lineage of Jesse, and of his race. Mary is her name in truth, she of whom I have spoken. She is in the Temple. Praying all day will ye find her, for she does naught else but pray to God our Lord that he fill her with his love.

[GABRIEL *vanishes.*]

ABIATHAR. Great Lord God, be thou thanked and blessed and adored, for it hath pleased thee to make known to us, O Lord, who this maiden is, her name and lineage. Solomon, and thou Micah, and Ben Judas and Samuel, sons of God and sons of Israel, ye have heard the command that the angel has made, which we have heard concerning this maiden which is called Mary.

Go, lords, go now, and be there no less than four of you, and bring unto me the maiden. Beware lest ye come

without her. Pray her most humbly that she come with you in haste. For full easily should ye find her, for she is at the Temple even as ye have heard.

ABRAHAM. Lord, thy command shall we perform without delay. Willingly shall we go there, in thankfulness and with great joy.

[*The EMBASSY OF PRIESTS goes out. Darkness.*]

SCENE II

[*MARY kneeling at prayer. The EMBASSY OF PRIESTS enter.*]

SOLOMON. Friend lady, God save thee and spare thee from wrath and ill. My lord the High Priest summons thee, and prays thee and commands thee that thou go to speak with him. Have no doubts of this. Tell us, lady, in truth if thou art named Mary?

MARY. What is it to you who I am? So God save you, let me be, for I am not used to being mocked.

ISAAC. Lady friend, we mock thee not, nor do we bring thee trouble. Indeed art thou she whom we seek, and soothly we know it. Well we know it in truth, for hither have we been sent. Come thou with us, be not stubborn.

MARY. Lords, since ye wish it so, let us go and turn us thither now.

LEVI. Lady, I say to thee, have no doubt of the High Priest Abiathar. He guards the people of Israel and thee will the King of Heaven guard.

[*Darkness.*]

SCENE III

[*The crowd about the HIGH PRIEST as before. The EMBASSY OF PRIESTS enters conducting MARY.*]

MICAH. Lord priest, here is the maid, saint and virgin,—God is with her!—whom thou didst command us to bring hither. Here she is, God guard me! Holy and humble wilt thou find her.

ABIATHAR. Welcome be ye, faithful messengers. Full well have ye done my bidding. [*To MARY.*] Lady, thou art welcome. I believe thou art called Mary.

MARY. Lord, I am, in very truth. So my parents named me. Tell me lord, your intention; wherefore have you caused me to come hither?

ABIATHAR. Lady, I have caused thee to come hither. I wish not to tell thee lies in the matter. God wills that thou have a husband and companion with whom to stay.

MARY. Lord, for a husband I have no care. I shall always be chaste and pure, if so it please God my Lord, my father whom I adore.

ABIATHAR. Let be. Speak no more. For God wills it and it is greatly pleasing to him, as has here been commanded and announced to us. Lords, go through the city, and then through your wards and cry aloud that there shall come to this feast old and young, white and grizzled, nor shall any fail us.

ISAAC. Lord, your command we shall do without any delay. For all those that will not come shall be brought to judgment.

[*The JEWS scatter to summon the men.*]

SOLOMON. Harken Lords and hear! Dress ye you now! It is come the time of the marriage of a maiden. Come all, fail not; for nothing shall ye stay away. Come, lords, nor remain behind! There shall not remain behind either small or great or young or old from three years old to a hundred. Come now, come now!

[*The crowd gathers in. JOSEPH and the ENVOIOUS ONE down front to one side.*]

ENVOIOUS ONE. [*To JOSEPH.*] Friend, say, do what thou shouldst, what is thy name and wherefore art thou come here? Do as thou ought, tell me the truth.

JOSEPH. Indeed I shall not lie. Gladly, lord, will I say it. Joseph is my name, know thou that. God help us to solace! Indeed is it ten days since I am come from Bethlehem. And I am come here in truth to see the marriage of the most beautiful creature that nature ever made or formed. Great will be the merry-making when this maid shall be wed. But I have naught to say. In marriage shall I never have her, nor with woman shall I ever make merry.

ENVOIOUS ONE. It is full strange to me, that thou art thus come that art so old and grizzled to see the most lovely event that ever befell in the world. Thou shalt not speak such words, that thou wilt not have her in marriage, that thou art too old. Never wilt thou see a maiden so lovely, so perfect as she. Go join in, thou shalt see that it will go well with thee.

JOSEPH. I shall by no means do such a thing, nor heed thy counsel. I know, for I have seen her, who shall have her in marriage. Know that king it is or count or duke or other nobleman or king. So shall she be married. Know that I am not come here for her, but to see the marriage. That is all.

ABIATHAR. Lords, it is not courtesy, know rather it is great villainy that those gentlemen that are aged should be mocked by the young. Speak not what I command not. Leave off this discourtesy at once.

[*To the people.*] Lords, I have bidden you come, for ye have all indeed heard that God wishes that we give a husband to this maiden whom ye see, so lovely ye know

not her equal. Help me pray to God, that he make manifest to us, an it please him, on this day, whom we may make her lawful spouse and good and natural husband and so do his pleasure.

LEVI. Take a dry rod, each of you that is here, and who shall bear the rod and it shall flower in his hand, be it affirmed, that his shall be the maiden that ye see here, for by miracles shall He make His will manifest to us.

ABRAHAM. Lord, full well hast thou spoken and preached of this affair.

ABIATHAR. Bow you all in prayer and be in affliction, and let us pray to God that he give us such manifestation as shall be pleasing to him and that he help us find him whom we wish to seek.

[*The whole company kneels in prayer. The choristers sing the Adorate Deum.*]

ABIATHAR. Rise ye all up. Each take a rod, and whose rod we shall see flower, him shall God have chosen.

ENVOIOUS ONE. Friend, take a dry rod. Thou knowst that thou shalt have the little one. She will be well married. She will never have to bear a child.

JOSEPH. Lord, thou hast insulted me and hast done me great injury; take her since thou so wishest it, but never say the like again.

[*JOSEPH's rod blossoms.*]

ABIATHAR. Lord Joseph, come hither. The blessed virgin shalt thou wed, for God wills it, well we know it, for we have seen the miracle.

ENVOIOUS ONE. Lord, make her marry him, so shouldst thou do, for his rod flowered, as the greater part of us that thou seest here have seen.

ABIATHAR. God hath made manifest by the flowering of the rod who shall be the husband of this maiden. Even as he commands shall we obey. Hear ye! We do hereby bind in wedlock these two.

[The crowd gathers around, hiding the pair, then separates, disclosing JOSEPH and MARY facing each other in the midst of the throng. Darkness.]

SCENE IV

[MARY kneeling.]

MARY. O God, thou father that I adore, show me thy grace. Unto thee have I sanctified myself. Thine am I. Be gracious unto me O God, and give me peace. Bless thou him who is my protector, him who guards for thee my maidenhood, for he is most worthy. Shower thy blessings upon all thy creatures O God, help him that is in misery. And may it be soon, the loosing of which the prophets have spoken. Send soon thy son that we may be freed from the pain of hell. For thou my father art a merciful father and God all-powerful.

[GABRIEL. appears.]

GABRIEL. O Mary, chosen of God, through thee shall thy prayer be answered. The Son of God shalt thou conceive in thy womb. A son shalt thou bear and Jesus shalt thou name him.

MARY. How shall this be, O Messenger of Heaven? No man have I yet known, nor shall I; for God have I consecrated my maidenhood. How shall it be that I shall bear a child?

GABRIEL. God careth for all things. Miracles shall he perform when he shall send to earth his only begotten son to redeem the world. Thou shalt bear him, for so hath

God determined, and without carnal shame shalt thou conceive him. The holy ghost shall descend upon thee. Behold thou shalt be known as the Mother of God and the generations shall adore thee.

MARY. Be it unto me as thou hast said. Behold in all things am I God's servant.

GABRIEL. And Elizabeth thy cousin, she who was called barren, even she is great with child. Behold she was chosen in her old age to be the mother of John of whom the prophet spake, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make his paths straight.

MARY. For thy tidings of joy I thank thee, O Messenger of God.

[GABRIEL *vanishes*.]

MARY. Blessed be the Lord! Blessed be the high-praised Trinity, the Father that hath chosen me, the Holy Ghost that hath cherished me, the Son that shall be my most dear child. For behold I among all the Virgins of Judah am chosen to be the mother of this child.

SCENE V

[MARY *and her* TWO HANDMAIDENS.]

MARY. The Angel that spake unto me hath said, Elizabeth thy cousin is with child.

1ST HANDMAIDEN. Behold nothing shall be impossible with God.

MARY. I must go and visit her, for I have not seen her this long time.

2ND HANDMAIDEN. Lady full of goodness, we shall go with thee into the mountains to visit Elizabeth.

JOSEPH. Lady, I wish that thou go, only that thou be not too long there. And greet me Zachary, that good man full of days.

[MARY, *accompanied by her* MAIDENS, *departs. Darkness.*]

SCENE VI

[ELIZABETH *stands to welcome* MARY *who enters with her* MAIDENS.]

MARY. Elizabeth, dear cousin, may that God that guards my maidenhood save thee thine unborn child and give thee great good fortune! Full great joy have I, know thou that, for God hath visited thee here and hath promised thee fruit of the womb and given that he serve thee.

ELIZABETH. Lady cousin, welcome. With great joy and great solace shalt thou be well received to-day, for thou art welcome. For when thou didst greet me, thou didst so excite me of the holy ghost that he hath so illuminated me, that my son leapt in my womb, for in God's name will he speak with thine. I know full certainly that God is truly with thee. Through thee shall the world be sustained, so art thou full of grace, wherefore do the faithful in sooth praise thee and the angels of heaven. God hath shown me so great honor that the mother of the creator who shall redeem the world and who holdeth all things in his hand is come to me. Rather should I go to her, seeing her gentle and humble for she is indeed the mother of God. The ground whereon I have seen her walk should I kiss in humility. Come, lady, seat thee; for I believe and know that thou art wearied.

MARY. Cousin, greatly shouldst thou praise our Saviour and adore him who hath promised us such babes. The

one is Jesus, the other John. Know that I shall serve him in all that I can and that it giveth me great joy.

[*Darkness.*]

SCENE VII

[JOSEPH *alone.*]

JOSEPH. Lords, concerning my spouse that is gone into the mountains, why has she staid so long? A good host must she have found in her cousin Zachary. But it has been fifteen days or indeed, so I believe, a month, or more. Do they wish to make a hermitess of her that they have sojourned there so long? Perhaps they have not found him who can come with her, for full in honor shall she come. I shall go and accompany her.

[*He goes out. Darkness.*]

SCENE VIII

[ELIZABETH and ZACHARY stand together. MARY sits to one side. JOSEPH enters to them.]

JOSEPH. Elizabeth and Zachary, God save you through years and days.

ZACHARY. Lord, God save thy person that so honored is and good. Cousin, thou giv'st us much to be thankful for, that thou hast wished to come hither. Now am I full joyous, for I see and hear my cousin.

Holy man, be thou welcome. Virgin and chaste is she kept for thee, the virgin God commended unto thee, for he finds thee chaste and virgin. Know that we are full joyous, for husband and wife have we with us. Lord, thou shalt bide and take the meal with us. Much that is good to eat shall we give thee, and well shall we have it pre-

pared. Then shall we render unto thee thy spouse. Full well have we guarded her for thee. Thou shalt then stay with us. So God thee save, tell us, wherefore art thou come to us?

JOSEPH. I am come for my spouse whom thou shouldst have brought to me. Thou hast kept her from me so long, that I believed that I had lost her. [*To MARY.*] Arise, lady: if thou wilt be so good. Let us return home.

MARY. Lord, willingly will I do it. Set thou out then upon the way. [*To ELIZABETH.*] Cousin, commend thee to God that he save our children.

ELIZABETH. Fair cousin, God save thee, thy child and spouse, and give thee joy full of all the goodness that thou hast given me.

JOSEPH. Lady, thou art tired. Methinks something is come upon thee.

MARY. Lord Joseph, in sooth I am with child. In Jesus Christ have I my hope, and in none other man of flesh that there is in the world, so God save me, but in God that is come from above, to suffer death in this world.

[*They go out together. Darkness.*]

SCENE IX

[*JOSEPH enters alone.*]

JOSEPH. Ah Lord God, such grief have I! Sorrowing and poor, what shall I do? Ah! King of heaven and earth, Lord, wherefore bringst thou such war against me? For my sins, full well I know it. Lord, know that I now shall die. This is no great miracle, for she is great with child, either boy or girl, she whom I have taken into my care. In the care of God I placed her. She promised me in

truth that she would always remain chaste, to God she promised it and to me she would always remain a virgin. Alas! Even so did I promise God when I took the maid to wife, to keep her and render her unto God a virgin. Alas! The vow I made was heard by all; and they will say, of me is she with child. The people will now believe that of me and will wish to stone me for they have heard me make the vow. Alas! If I disclose her, full lightly will the Jews stone her. Ah Lord God, thee will she accuse, as I hear, and will blaspheme thee. For if thou wouldst sport with woman, this one shouldst thou choose, for there is no more beautiful creature in the world, nor has such beauty ever been made. Never have I seen so lovely a creature. She says this child is of God and is descended from heaven. I believe it is indeed so, for she prays each day. Of no man hath she conceived, that ever was born. Never would she entice or deceive or lead on. O miserable that I am, shall I disclose her? Counsel I seek of God. I shall not do so, I shall not deliver her to death. I shall not disclose her for this. By my faith, I shall flee.

[GABRIEL *appears to him.*]

GABRIEL. Joseph, friend, hearken to me. Be not doubtful of this that is come to pass, for thou art of the royal lineage, to thee hath God commended the virgin. Know thou well that with no man hath she sinned, of that I assure thee, be not careworn for that she is with child and is near to give birth. For that which shall be born of her, know that God it shall be and man. Conceived of the Holy Ghost, the Son of God is he. Have no fear of the maid. Take her unto thee then and go with her, and serve her full humbly, for she is in truth the mother of God.

JOSEPH. Who art thou that thus graciously hast comforted me so kindly? My heart is all made joyous in me, so graciously hast thou spoken to me.

GABRIEL. Know that I am Gabriel, and that I am sent from heaven above. Full truth have I told thee of that which I here have shown thee.

[GABRIEL *vanishes leaving* JOSEPH *standing looking after. Darkness.*]

SCENE X

[MARY *stands centre, JOSEPH enters.*]

JOSEPH. Virgin, full of humility, pardon me this sin, this great error and folly which I have thought of thee. Virgin, holy lady Mary, humble lady, chaste and pious, O lady, of thy great mercy I ask it, turn me not over to the judgment.

For the fault and the great error pardon the sinner. The Son of God hast thou conceived. That have I learned full well of the angel. He has made most certain to me that he shall be born before tomorrow. And if it please thee, when I shall hold him, full faithfully shall I protect him.

MARY. Lord Joseph, pardoned be thou. Rise up and let us take our way. The time of my delivery will be soon. Know that in truth.

[*They go out. Darkness.*]

SCENE XI

[*The HOST and ANASTASIA stand to one side. MARY and JOSEPH enter from the other.*]

JOSEPH. Lord and lady, God save you, and guard you from wrath and ill! Ah! good sir, if you please to lodge us in God's name, and great pity show us? God will know how to reward you.

HOST. Ah good people, go ye hence. For here I take in no more people; there is here nor house nor hut that is not full of people.

ANASTASIA. Lord father, lodge them, for full modest do they appear to me and people of great humility. Lord, have pity.

HOST. Daughter, I cannot lodge them here with comfort, for we cannot hold any more here, wherefore they cannot lie here; wherefore I say to them with good heart that here they shall no longer tarry.

ANASTASIA. Lord father, with great pleasure ought they to lie in the stable.

HOST. Daughter, I give you permission, for I see they are fine people. Lead them thither and give them sleeping places where best thou canst provide for them.

ANASTASIA. Lord, most gratefully shall I do it. God, though, hath not shown me wherewith I may help them nor do things that were of service to them. Would that I had hands! [*To MARY and JOSEPH.*] Come lady. I shall lead you there where you shall lie, which pleases me greatly. For you shall lodge in this place: my lord has said yes to you.

MARY. Tell me thy name, friend, that Jesus Christ may bless thee.

ANASTASIA. Fair lady, so please you, I am called Anastasia. I cannot here make long delay. Be it with God, that I return.

MARY. Friend, I know truly that he who made the world of nothing, if thou return, will cure thee and perform miracles by thee.

ANASTASIA. Fair lady, I shall come here willingly, an it please thee.

[ANASTASIA goes, conducting MARY and JOSEPH. *Darkness.*]

SCENE XII

[MARY sits with the CHILD in her arms. JOSEPH stands by her. The choristers sing the Sanctus, then MARY speaks.]

MARY. Lord Joseph, an it please thee, say for me to the maiden that she shall come to lie here with me all this evening.

JOSEPH. Send me where thou wilt, fair lady, as it please thee, for I shall do gladly, lady, thy command.

[JOSEPH goes to one side and meets ANASTASIA.]

JOSEPH. O lady who givest us lodgings, but come, an it please thee, for the lady prays thee mightily that thou go there.

ANASTASIA. Ah God! and I, what shall I do there? For in sooth nor hands have I nor fingers. But none the less gladly shall I go there. With all my power shall I help her. [*To MARY.*] Whatsoever I can with my handless arms shall I do to serve thee, lady.

[JOSEPH comes to MARY'S side and stands there throughout the scene.]

MARY. Come, Anastasia. Be gracious to the child. For great reward shalt thou find when thou hast held the child.

ANASTASIA. [*Receiving the child in her arms.*] Fair child, be thou welcome! Much great joy hast thou given us. Ah fair sweet creature, God give thee great good fortune! For never have I seen a child so beautiful, so help me God, nor small nor great. Fair lady, give me new hands, in God's name, so it please thee.

[ANASTASIA'S hands are made whole, the sleeves folding back to reveal them.]

Ah! Lord God! Glorious King! Lord God, thanked be thou!

MARY. [*Taking the child back.*] Friend, great joy shalt thou have, for in thy hands hast thou held him. I knew well that he would do miracles by thee when he should be born.

[ANASTASIA *runs to her father who enters at one side.*]

ANASTASIA. Lord, great joy shouldst thou have. For such hands as thou canst see hath the child given me this day that is born of Mary.

HOST. Daughter, say, dost mock me?

ANASTASIA. No, no, sir, by my faith. These lovely hands canst thou see, and canst indeed believe it all in truth.

HOST. Lord God, be thou thanked, that thou have given hands unto my daughter. Indeed I can marry her forthwith, and I could not do it before. [*To ANASTASIA.*] Daughter, bring her bread and wine, that she may eat this morning; fruit and cheese bring her and depart not from her.

ANASTASIA. By God, sir, thou needst not command, for never do I wish to leave her. Always I wish to be her servant, nothing could give me such joy. Nor give me a husband, although thou grumble about it.

HOST. Go there now indeed and take thou what thou ought to take.

ANASTASIA. Yes, lord, gladly and happily will I go there.

[*The HOST goes out.*]

[*To MARY.*] Mary, God give you good day, and save thee the child. Thou seest that I have returned. Take water, wash thy hands. Eat lady, an it please thee. Here near by are bread and wine and other things to eat.

MARY. Anastasia, praise the child that hath rendered and given hands unto thee in his goodness.

ANASTASIA. Indeed I should do it and I shall, with all my power even so long as I live.

[ANASTASIA *kneels before MARY and the CHILD. Darkness.*]

SCENE XIII

[*The SHEPHERDS in half darkness lie sleeping. The choristers chant the Gloria in excelsis. Then GABRIEL appears in a flood of light.*]

1ST SHEPHERD. Kind companions, arise! I do not believe that ye have ever seen the heaven so lighted up nor of such brilliance. Well nigh a hundred years is it that I have watched my flocks but I have never seen nor heard tell of such brilliance coming from the heavens. Let us pray to God that he protect us from ill, us and our beasts.

GABRIEL. Lords, ye who guard your flocks, fear not. For know that it is of God, this great brilliance that ye see here. I am the angel Gabriel, sent from heaven above to tell you the joy that today is given unto all people. For Jesus Christ is now born, through whom shall be my salvation, in Bethlehem in the city of David without carnal sin. Go thither. In the manger shall ye find him, when ye shall come there, and wrapped in a swaddling cloth, this child that now is born. Glory and praise in heaven be given to God by the faithful, for on earth is born peace to men of good will.

[*The ANGEL disappears, leaving the SHEPHERDS in semi-darkness.*]

2ND SHEPHERD. Lords, let us go to Bethlehem to see this thing that we have heard, that we may know if it is true

as the angel hath said, that Jesus Christ is there born. For God hath sent him to us and announced it to us through the angel. Go we thither and adore him, and do we even as we ought.

3RD SHEPHERD. Fair companions, I desire the child for whom the angels make great joy. So should we too do. Him who wished to live among us, him who shall rule over all that is, heaven, earth and sea, over all creation, him should we worship. Great honor it gives us, the birth of this lord who is announced by the angel. We should greatly praise him. Come fair companions, let us offer him this penny.

[*They go out. Darkness.*]

SCENE XIV

[*MARY holding the CHILD, JOSEPH, and ANASTASIA grouped. The SHEPHERDS come in, kneel, and adore. Then they offer their gifts. The FIRST and SECOND SHEPHERDS offer last and speak as they do so.*]

1ST SHEPHERD. Lord, Saviour of Israel, little child of God in heaven, thou art in truth the infant Jesus. Blessed, Lord, be thou. Part God, part man, all-powerful. Lord, we adore thee, for that thou hast freed us of peril. For in truth art thou the Son of God, and through thee is all the world redeemed and the devil conquered. Wherefore we pray, Lord, an it please thee, that thou forgive our sins.

2ND SHEPHERD. Fair companions, let us go. This son of God omnipotent, here have we found him as the angel said in Bethlehem. Holy ghost, be thou praised and God the father be thou glorified, and thou, mother of humility, in thy womb hast thou borne him, in Bethlehem hast thou given him birth, whence is the joy of the faithful.

[GABRIEL *enters to one side and speaks to the audience.*]

GABRIEL. Born is peace to men of good will. Go, shepherds, say unto all people that God is in truth born on earth, saying the holy angel Gabriel saith that we shall find this child, lying in a manger. Joyously let us go to see the child. Here shall we find him as the angel saith in truth. Between the ox and the ass was he laid, and in a swaddling cloth was he wrapped. Through thee, Lord, shall be my salvation, for thou art born to deliver us from sin. Mother of God, we should praise thee wholly, and thy dear Son all people should adore. God is come into thee and become flesh. Part God, part man, O lady, of thee is he born. Let us all praise God the father omnipotent who hath sent his son to be born.

[*Darkness. The choristers sing* Hodie Christus natus est.]

PART II

UNPRODUCED PLAYS

Translated and adapted by
DONALD FAY ROBINSON

THE HESSIAN CHRISTMAS PLAY

CAST

PROLOGUE	FIRST REJOICING ANGEL
GABRIEL	SECOND REJOICING ANGEL
MARY	FIRST SHEPHERD
JOSEPH	GOATBEARD, his man
GAYHEART, his servant	SECOND SHEPHERD
ARNOLD, an innkeeper	THIRD SHEPHERD
REUBEN, a miser	HEROD

FIRST SCRIBE	}	at the court of HEROD
SECOND SCRIBE		
FIRST PRINCE		
SECOND PRINCE		

LUCIFER	}	Devils in attendance on LUCIFER
SATAN		
BELIAL		
BEELZEBUB		
BAAL		
MAHOMET		

ANGELS, SHEPHERDS, DEVILS, PRINCES, CHILDREN

CHANTS USED

Creator alme siderum
Gloria in Excelsis
Pange Lingua
Magnificat
Hodie Christus natus est
Sanctus
Kyrie Eleison

THE HESSIAN CHRISTMAS PLAY

PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE. Hush and hear, all ye good folk together, both great and small, both poor and rich. Hush ye now all and mark what I say unto you. We are now about to present a play concerning our Lord Jesus Christ who was born this day of Mary the Virgin Maid; that it might be fulfilled what the prophets have told us, how that a little child should be born that should free us from the pain of hell. Therefore hush ye now and leave off unruly noises. Then shall be given you eternal life as your reward in heaven. That that befall us above all things, so help us the Holy Ghost. [*Exit.*]

[*The chorus sings two or three stanzas of the Creator alme siderum.*]

SCENE I

[*Lights dim. MARY down left praying. Enter GABRIEL up right in a flood of light.*]

GABRIEL. *Ave gratia plena! Dominus tecum. Benedicta tu in mulieribus!* Greetings to thee, Mary. Receive thou the son of the eternal God. Thou art full of grace. Thou art most favored of God. The Lord is with thee: that do I now proclaim to thee. For I am sent to thee from God and make known to thee his message.

[*MARY, frightened, does not answer.*]

Fear not, Mary. God hath joined himself with thee. Behold, at this hour thou hast found grace. Thou shalt bear

a child and Jesus shall be his name. And he shall be called the son of the Highest, the son of him who holdeth all things in his hand.

MARY. Angel of God, how shall this be, or how shall this come to pass that I conceive? For at no time have I known any man. How then may it be or come to pass that I should bear a child?

GABRIEL. Mary, merciful queen, the Holy Ghost is come upon thee. Thou mayst rest assured. Thou shalt bear in thy body the son of God, Christ Jesus, who is the comforter of us all.

MARY. Be it unto me according to thy word. I am God's handmaiden. His will be done unto me. As he desireth, so shall it come to pass. Against him I may not strive. He hath shown me grace.

SCENE II

[*Lights medium bright. JOSEPH alone down left.*]

JOSEPH. O woe, O woe, to-day and evermore! What shall I do? What will become of me? Mary is great with child. In sooth I am not to blame. I will depart from her and bide here no longer. I will journey hence at once.

[*Enter MARY up right.*]

JOSEPH. Mary, God shall bless thee and care for thee worthily. Strange things come upon thee. I will hie me hence at once.

MARY. Joseph, this deed cometh of the Holy Ghost. Thou art innocent therein. Thou shalt not depart from me.

JOSEPH. Nay, I bide not here. Something is come upon thee. For this shalt thou be shamed wheresoever in the land men hear of it.

[JOSEPH *starts to go, crossing down right. MARY folds her hands and gazes toward heaven. GABRIEL appears down right in JOSEPH'S path.*]

GABRIEL. *Ioseph, fili David, noli timere accipere Mariam coniugem tuam.* Joseph, thou of the seed of David, understand me now aright. Thou shalt not leave Mary alone, for she is a pure maiden. This birth cometh of the Holy Ghost. [*Exit.*]

JOSEPH. Since that all these things come of God in heaven, I am of firm mind to bide and to care well for Mary. [*Turns to MARY.*] Mary, thou chaste maiden, the angel has told me that life shall be born of thee. Thou shalt forgive me that I have behaved so foolishly. I shall nevermore forsake thee.

MARY. Joseph, my kind protector, thou shalt be welcome unto me. Now take thou pity on me, miserable that I am, and find us lodgings that we may bide the night. God show thee grace.

SCENE III

[*Enter JOSEPH and MARY at the back. ARNOLD stands portly and with crossed arms down left; REUBEN, lean and fidgety, down right. JOSEPH addresses ARNOLD.*]

JOSEPH. Lord host, God give you good day, and help us you who well can help. I beseech you by the will of God that you give lodgings to me and to the maiden with me.

ARNOLD. Get thee hence, thou old vagabond. Else will I beat thy loins for thee. Thou sayst she is a gentle maiden; and behold she is even now far gone with child! How dar'st thou so to lie? Thinkst thou to deceive the world? Never a night's lodging will I give thee: thy lying mouth hath done thee that. [*Exit.*]

JOSEPH. [*To MARY.*] Alas, thou chaste maiden! They will nowhere let us in. Go we to this man to see if he will show us any mercy. [*Turns to REUBEN.*] God greet you, kind sir. Give us lodgings I beseech thee by the glory of God.

REUBEN. Good man, I tell thee I can have naught to do with thee. Neither canst thou bide here. Thou needest a cradle, and that would make my house too small for me. Nor can I suffer the length of time. I want my room for myself. Thou must go seek lodgings elsewhere. [*Exit.*]

JOSEPH. O thou eternal God! Be our suffering cried out to thee! I can find no place where we may lodge. My grief might well overwhelm me. How long must I wander and be without comfort? But I will suffer it, wretched though I am, for I am driven by the will of God.

MARY. Against God we may not strive.—Joseph, give me thy counsel. What shall I do? The pain is come upon me. I must bide here. God will perform a miracle.

SCENE IV

[*Loud chanting: Gloria in excelsis. Lights full up. MARY and JOSEPH centre on either side of the manger. GAY-HEART kneeling down left. The back is banked with ANGELS. GABRIEL in the centre, the two REJOICING ANGELS that speak at the extreme right and left of the line facing inwards toward the holy family.*]

GABRIEL. *Gloria in altissimis deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.* To God in the highest be praise and glory eternal, and with men on earth, O Lord, let there be peace. With good will the Lord shall still the wrath which hath been between man and Christ.

MARY. Joseph, my dear cousin, help me to comfort the child, and God be thy rewarder in heaven, he who was born of the virgin Mary.

JOSEPH. Gladly, my dear cousin, will I help thee to comfort the child, and God be my rewarder in heaven, he who was born of the virgin Mary. [*To his servant GAYHEART.*] Gayheart, my man, sing with me and let us be gay, for the Saviour is sent to us upon the earth.

GAYHEART. Joseph, my kind lord, we will sing and be gay. We shall never repent of it. Our wheel of fortune is swung full circle. Ay, lord, I say that no child was ever dearer to me.

[*CHILDREN come in and group around down front. Tableau: ANGELS massed in the back, singing; JOSEPH to right of the manger; MARY sitting to left; the man GAYHEART kneeling left front of the manger; CHILDREN kneeling in groups front to right and left.*]

JOSEPH. Behold, ye children, for this is indeed the son of God.

MARY. Rejoice with me, dear children. For the Lord hath shown me great grace. God lay beneath my breasts. The Holy Ghost cherished me. I am as the morning star that is so bright. All is in servitude to me, sun, stars, and the moon too, and all that lives in the world, and all that strives for life at the bottom of the sea, and the little birds. Earth, air, fire, and water,—the four elements serve me. God and his angels rejoice in me. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

1ST REJOICING ANGEL. Blessed be thou, holy God. Praise and glory to-day, always, and evermore be sung to thee at this time. Great joy is become known to us in heaven. Therefore we rejoice to-day and forever.

2ND REJOICING ANGEL. Hail! thou gracious lady! Thou art she whom the patriarchs longed for, whom the prophets foresaw, and of whom the angels sang. Thou art the most exalted of mortals. At thy command stands

all that the heavens encompass. The angels praise thee. Would that all that God ever created had voices or could cry out, and that all creation had the tongues of men to speak thy praise!

MARY. Thanks be to thee, O father, son and holy ghost, for the glory and the wonder that thou hast granted me.

1ST REJOICING ANGEL. Glory and praise to thee O Christ, thou that art the son of the true God. Praise be to the Father. Praise be to the Holy Ghost. O Lord that hast boundless joy, praise be to thee!

2ND REJOICING ANGEL. Hail holy babe! In Bethlehem didst thou lie, in wind and in rain in an open stable. With the ox and the ass wert thou cradled. And behold, even the beasts would be thy protectors. All things rejoice that are in heaven or in earth, which should else be lost in eternal pain. For the glorious chest is opened wherein lay sealed the uncredited word of the prophet: a virgin shall bear a son which shall bring gladness into all the world.

MARY. Joseph, my kind cousin, help me to comfort the child, and God be thy rewarder in heaven, he who was born of the virgin Mary.

JOSEPH. Mary, my kind cousin, gladly will I help thee to comfort the child, and God be my rewarder in heaven, he who was born of the virgin Mary.

[*The ANGELS sing Gloria in excelsis in unison with the male chorus.*]

SCENE V

[*Chanting throughout: Gloria in excelsis. Semi-darkness. FIRST SHEPHERD and his man GOATBEARD asleep. GABRIEL appears in a flood of light up right.*]

GABRIEL. *Nolite timere: ecce enim evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum, quod erit toti populo.* Ye shepherds, great joy do I announce to you. There is but now come to pass a great miracle, even as the patriarchs have long desired. He is born whom God has chosen for his son; and God has sent him onto the earth, a heavenly saviour. [*Exit.*]

[*The SHEPHERD half rises in the ensuing darkness, sees nothing, and falls back to sleep. The ANGEL reënters in a flood of light. The SHEPHERD rises to a sitting posture as the ANGEL speaks and sees him.*]

GABRIEL. *Nolite timere: ecce enim evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum, quod erit toti populo.* Ye shepherds, ye shall rise and go to Bethlehem and shall gaze upon the saviour whom the father has sent upon this earth. He lies among oxen and asses in a little manger. [*Exit.*]

1ST SHEPHERD. [*Rising.*] Wake, wake, my man. That must be the angel of God. Arise quick, kind goodman Goatbeard. How sound thou sleepest. I cannot awaken thee. I'll thrust thee then with my stick. [*Does so.*]

GOATBEARD. [*Starting up.*] How come, how come, that thou awakest me thus so early and thrustest me with thy stick so hard in my sides?

1ST SHEPHERD. Goodman Goatbeard, I hear a singing and a resounding in the clouds!

GOATBEARD. Lord, methinketh things have befallen thee as befell me just now. Methought in my sleep that I was a cow and that thou hadst become a swine. That might well be trickery. But it surely did befall thee, Lord. Believe and do not doubt. It seemed good to me in my mind that thou didst let me sleep and be thy comrade.

1ST SHEPHERD. Harken, goodman Goatbeard. I heard such a loud noise and such a good singing and so lovely a voice that I awoke. It was the angel from heaven, (ay,

comrade, or so it appeared to me) and brought us good tidings, how that there is born Christ Jesus, he who is a comforter of all the world, of a virgin maid (of such a happening have the prophets oft told us) and how that he lies in Bethlehem in a manger under the broken-down shed where we were but shortly, and where thou wert nigh frozen.

GOATBEARD. Lord, thither will we go and let our dogs stand beside the shed.

[*Chanting still. Other SHEPHERDS have come in and gathered about the FIRST SHEPHERD as he was talking. Now he addresses them.*]

1ST SHEPHERD. Ye good folk, be ye all glad, for I have heard most joyous tidings, how that the saviour of all the lands of the earth is born unto us. Methought in my sleep I heard an angel call a message and it was that we should all rejoice. Therefore we are going to where the child lies and welcome the little child with gladness.

2ND SHEPHERD. [*From among the crowd.*] Say, my good comrade, what is it thou wishest to do? I am sore afraid that something hath befallen thee.

1ST SHEPHERD. And unto thee, comrade, I say in answer, it has befallen thee even as it has me. I cannot move from here and I scarce can stand.

[*Pause. The chant swells louder, with female voices as well.*]

3RD SHEPHERD. [*From among the crowd.*] Hark! I hear the angels singing sweetly about the throne of God. Lord God, they say, praise and glory we sing to thee forevermore. Comrades mine, we will bide here until we see what this sign betokens.

[GABRIEL *reënters with a flood of light. The SHEPHERDS fall on their knees and shade their eyes.*]

GABRIEL. *Nolite timere: ecce enim evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum, quod erit toti populo.* Joy be proclaimed to you all. I make known to you now an exceeding great gladness. There is born unto us a saviour, a king over all lands, of Mary the virgin maid in Bethlehem town. Go ye thither. Ye will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. And give him praise and glory, for he is the lord of us all. [*Exit.*]

1ST SHEPHERD. Goodman Goatbeard! Goodman Comfortless! Let us get us to the highway to Bethlehem town as the angel has told us. There we shall see with our eyes if the child lie there in swaddling clothes. And if we find the child, then we will proclaim it to all people. The angel spake thus: I announce to you a great joy. He may indeed be joy of which no man can write or read enough. Undoubting I say it. A chaste maiden hath given us joy.

SCENE VI

[*The chanting takes up the Pange Lingua. Lights full up. MARY, JOSEPH, GAYHEART, grouped about the manger.*]

MARY. Come hither, Joseph, kind lord. God honor thee ever! Help me to care for my child, he who owns heaven and earth. For all that is to come hereafter shall cry out to him. He who else were condemned to eternal pain hopes for the birth of my child, that he be redeemed and comforted by him. And thou, Joseph, be thou by me. For that will I thank thee ever.

JOSEPH. Gladly, Mary queen. I have long wished in my

heart that I might serve thee and thy so noble child which is called Jesus. I should long have gladly done so. Well for me that I was ever born! I come now at once that I may serve him. That gladdens my heart. Therefore I come to thee: industriously will I serve thee.

GAYHEART. [*Kneeling.*] Be thou welcome! Look thou upon these lands, thou living saviour. Be thou welcome into thy kingdom. Methinks thou lookest like God even as the scripture prophesies to us. A chaste maiden hath brought thee into the world, for that thou wouldst become a man.

[*The SHEPHERDS come in, group around down front, and kneel. The Pange Lingua continues softly throughout the scene.*]

1ST SHEPHERD. Greetings to thee, thou little child, and eke to thee Mary his mother, thou who art a comforter of all the world. Greetings to thee, Christ Jesus. I pray thee in the threefold name that thou show us grace.

2ND SHEPHERD. Greetings to thee, noble star. Verily am I glad to see thee. Greetings be to thy mother! Thou shalt be welcome among us. Thou wouldst be born here onto this earth, not for thy own pleasure, but that thou mightest still the wrath which hath so long been upon it. Now are we all saved.

3RD SHEPHERD. Greetings to thee, Christ Jesus. I am thankful that thou art come and art now born and given unto us. For we were indeed lost. Greetings be to thy mother, Mary the lovely pure maiden. To comfort us art thou come to us. Praise be to thee!

[*They bow in adoration. MARY stretches out her hand in blessing. The Pange Lingua swells out louder and then ends.*]

SCENE VII

[*Softly, as from a great distance, the chorus chants the Magnificat over and over throughout the entire scene. Lights dim. LUCIFER. centre, calling. DEVILS enter from both sides down front.*]

LUCIFER. Hither! Hither, all ye devils, hither! Hither! Hither from hell! Satan, Beelzebub, Belial, Baal! Come ye devils, both small and great! Come, ye devils, one and all!

[*The DEVILS gather around him eagerly.*]

LUCIFER. Now whist ye and let me speak to you. I cannot keep it silent. A child is new born. Methinketh he is called Christ the son of the Most High God. That will do us great harm, for I fear me the child will avenge himself on us and break in hell and steal from us the souls that we have won. That would shame us utterly. Satan, canst thou prevent so great a harm befalling us, I should thank thee heartily. Now advise, all ye dear comrades.

SATAN. Lucifer, since so thy words be which I have heard thee speak, I will bethink me how I may harm this child. I will examine long and hard if his birth be of God. But in any matter, Lucifer, despair not. Mark close what I say unto thee. If the child is indeed he whom men call Christ, then we will bethink us how we may bring harm upon the people of the earth, and deceive them and hinder them from believing in him. So may we bear off many souls to hell!

LUCIFER. Satan, thou art a clever cock! I shall reward thee well.

BEELZEBUB. Lord, I am called Beelzebub. I have bethought me how Lord Satan's plan may be put in action. Men call this child a king, a great and powerful king. Let me then

strike envy into the heart of all the ruling lords of all the earth. An you will let me, Lord, I will make all kings hate him; so may we soon have our palaces adorned with the heads of kings.

LUCIFER. Most wise art thou, Sir Beelzebub. Thou hast my permission, nay my command, to make thy plan a deed. Thou mayst begin with Herod, king of Judah.

[BEELZEBUB bows.]

BELIAL. May I speak, O Lord? [LUCIFER nods.] I am Belial, most revered Lord. An you would hear me, methinks I have a plan. Let Herod be not merely jealous. Let him do murder in his jealousy. Then indeed shall that proud king be ours.

LUCIFER. Sir Belial, thy wisdom is great. Hearken ye all! Belial says, Let Herod do murder in his jealousy. How shall this be done?

BAAL. O Lord, I am Baal, one of the meanest of your servants, O great Lord.

LUCIFER. Speak, Sir Baal, an thou have something to say.

BAAL. O great and omnipotent Lord, shepherds are but even now departing from the cradle of the child. Let them tell Herod of the new-born king. Thus shall Herod be made jealous and incensed and do murder on the innocents in his jealousy, and kill this new-born child.

LUCIFER. Most cunning, Sir Baal! Thou shalt be set higher in my esteem.—So be it, even as Sir Baal has said.

[*The meeting starts to break up. Another DEVIL, MAHOMET, comes rushing in.*]

MAHOMET. Lucifer, thou shalt be grateful to me! I have news for thee and have come running fast to tell thee the wonderful tidings. As I stood and watched, there stood

an old man with a beard and a young man spake unto him saying, Then shall come a lamb to make all souls blessed. He shall avenge himself on Lucifer and break in hell, that all the souls there may be released therefrom.—Now, how doth that please thee, Lucifer?

LUCIFER. Truly, thou art a forehanded devil!—Come, ye devils, Baal and Beelzebub, Belial and Satan, and be it done even as ye have said.—And, Satan, thou hadst best make our walls stronger and double the guard.

SCENE VIII

[As in the last scene, the chorus may be heard chanting over and over the Hodie Christus natus est. Lights medium bright. HEROD centre. Enter to him the SHEPHERDS down left.]

HEROD. Good sirs, be ye welcome to me. What news have ye heard? Have ye seen any strange thing? Ye shall tell me truthfully. Or do ye know of any new happenings? Ye shall not keep silent about them. I speak it on my honor, what ye tell me shall not be gossiped abroad.

1ST SHEPHERD. Lord, we have seen something, and we will now relate it to you. I tell you this and it is true: there came a bright angel as we were watching our flocks (in sooth I say it) and told us a blessed story, how that Jesus Christ was born. And he bade us make it known unto the people.

2ND SHEPHERD. Lord, I will tell you yet more and will not keep it silent from you. There came a lovely angel that shone so bright onto the earth that we were sore afraid. And we heard the news that our saviour Jesus Christ even then was born.

[HEROD dismisses the SHEPHERDS, and they leave down left. He then claps his hands, and two SCRIBES enter down right.]

HEROD. Ye lords, have ye heard the news? Shepherds have come hither and told me a tale that pains me to the heart. They say that Christ is born. The news makes me angry indeed. I ask you, consider carefully if ye have heard where he shall be born? Say, or ye have lost my mercy utterly.

1ST SCRIBE. Lord, I have read in my books that it can be no otherwise than that Christ be born in Bethlehem. Let not the news make you angry. I would not deceive you concerning the holy writ: it is true, or else the books themselves must lie.

2ND SCRIBE. Lord, I am called Habakkuk. The holy writ is well known to me. I tell you, for I have read it, that it can come to pass no otherwise than as it standeth written. I will not lie about it. Isaiah the prophet hath said: Christ shall be born in Bethlehem town.

[HEROD, by clapping his hands, summons the PRINCES to him. They enter down left and down right.]

HEROD. Ye lords, all of you, both great and small, ye shall give me your counsel, how it behooves me to do. They say a king is born (verily that saddens and angers me) who is mighty and powerful so that no king may be likened unto him. Were he to be set over me, that were a great shame to me. Therefore advise ye me all how I shall do in this matter.

1ST PRINCE. Lord, I will give you good counsel, how it is seemly for you to do. You shall now send out your servants to all ends of the land as far as your kingdom stretches. Be sure of this now, that with all his wisdom he can never escape. And whatsoever young children they

shall find that are under two years old, them shall you spare not at all, but you shall order that they be put to death.

HEROD. Soothly will I follow thy counsel. Thou hast rightly advised me. Ye lords, ye shall arm you well and hie you hence as far as my kingdom stretches. Know that now at this time! And whatsoever young children ye find that are under two years old, them shall ye spare not at all, ye shall put them to death. And let no one of them escape, or it shall cost you your own lives.

2ND PRINCE. [*Stepping forward.*] Lord, I am called Ahaz. I am a lazy chap. But I swear by my head and my beard that I will spare no trouble in this. Whatsoever young children I come upon must all taste the bitterness of death at my hands and wax red in their own blood. Of this you may be sure, were there a hundred thousand of them, I should let not one of them survive.

HEROD. [*Smiling.*] Ye lords, good day to you. I say on my faith that I will so nobly reward you, that ye shall reap everlasting benefit therefrom.

2ND PRINCE. Lord, by my hope of salvation, I will do the best I can.

[*Exeunt LORDS and SCRIBES. HEROD stands smiling evilly. Dimly the Hodie Christus still sounds in the distance.*]

SCENE IX

[*Near and loud the chorus chants the Sanctus, singing more softly when the ANGEL starts to speak. Lights dim. JOSEPH and MARY with the CHILD in her arms asleep. GABRIEL enters up right in a flood of light. JOSEPH half rises.*]

GABRIEL. *Surge et accipe puerum et matrem eius et fuge in Ægyptum et esto ibi usque dum dicam tibi.* Joseph, I do now make known to thee that Herod at this hour is come into the land and killeth outright all the children that are under two years old. I come to tell thee that thou shalt go into Egypt, a land unknown to Herod, that the tender child may there abide alive. [*Exit.*]

[JOSEPH rises and wakens MARY.]

JOSEPH. Mary, a voice has spoken to me in my sleep, and I have heard that Herod killeth all children that are under two years old. The voice said unto me that we should go hence into Egypt, that no harm come to the child. Therefore let us depart.

MARY. Joseph, my dear protector, it were a great sorrow to my heart, should the child lose his life. Then should I have lived an evil time. Therefore, Joseph, let us depart from hence, that the little child lose not his tender life.

JOSEPH. Come thou then. It is time.

[JOSEPH and MARY depart down right. The chorus has simultaneously come to the end of the Sanctus. There is a slight pause. Then very softly the chorus begins the Kyrie Eleison, singing gradually louder and louder. Presently the SERVANTS of HEROD troop through from right and left, searching and finding nothing. They go out centre back. The lights start to dim. The chant swells louder. Immediately the DEVILS come in from right and left, meeting. When they see that the CHILD is gone, they slink back severally the way they have come, as the chant swells out yet louder. The front stage is now darkened. Suddenly a bright light back stage that leaves the front stage in darkness shows MARY and JOSEPH, framed by the centre door, trudging slowly across from right to left. The chant rises to an exultant close.]

THE MAASTRICHT PLAY

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CAST

GOD
JUSTICE
MERCY
LADY CHURCH
BALAAM
ISAIAH
VIRGIL
GABRIEL
MARY
JOSEPH
FIRST SHEPHERD
SECOND SHEPHERD
HEROD'S MESSENGER
FIRST KING
SECOND KING
THIRD KING
HEROD
FIRST KNIGHT
SECOND KNIGHT
RACHEL
SHEPHERDS, KNIGHTS, MOTHERS OF THE INNOCENTS

CHANTS USED

Creator Alme Siderum
Sanctus
Hodie Christus natus est
Kyrie Eleison

THE MAASTRICHT PLAY

SCENE I

[Brilliant light fore-stage. Back-stage in half darkness. Half concealed in the darkness sits GOD on a high throne centre. Nearer front and in the brilliance stand JUSTICE and MERCY on his left, and on his right LADY CHURCH, an impressive figure. Further down right from JUSTICE and MERCY, diagonally across from LADY CHURCH, stand grouped the PROPHETS, BALAAM, ISAIAH and VIRGIL. Down left stands GABRIEL, strangely humbled by the brilliance of the other heavenly figures, yet so attired as to appear resplendent as over against mortals in the following scenes.]

GOD. Hear, Lady Justice, and hear thou too, Lady Mercy, my daughter, what I am about to ask of thee: if to any child it may ever happen that he may by any means win back the heritage that beforetime was turned from out his father's hand and willingly given unto another for all his life as an heritage?

MERCY. I was ever and shall ever be thy daughter and thou my father. Mercy I am called. Thou hast given me that name. If thou wouldst not show mercy to them that cry up to thee and wail, how wert thou then my father or how should I remain thy daughter, we who have ever been one together, I thy daughter, thou my father; and ever must remain one and inseparate, two in one. Father, then, this is my counsel, that thou redeem thy handiwork. Raise thou up thy godly arm and show mercy over the

children of Adam and Eve who have been all too long in need.

GOD. Daughter, Lady Justice, give me thy counsel and thy judgment, how I may with righteousness and love win back that which I have given and turned for an heritage into another's hand.

JUSTICE. I am called Justice, the name that was wrapped about me and given me by your godhead, and we have ever been and shall forever remain inseparate. Father mine, if thou give mercy, where then bides justice? Therefore I give thee this counsel: for it would seem to me impossible that any child appropriate the heritage that his father before had given unto another man, ere that child yet was born. It were his, if it were possible that a virgin bear a child and remain as she was before, a virgin. That same child and none other might with just wisdom possess that heritage which was given out for an heritage unto another ere that child won life.

GOD. [*To himself.*] For David my prophet said, many days is it of suffering. Justice and peace have joined. Mercy hath the desire, and truth, that they become at peace with one another. Now do I will that the earth be filled with my mercy. In this it occurs to me to do so that I shall make a compromise between justice and mercy. And I shall do with this peace as I did to Abraham, to whom I sent a wither which he burnt in his son's stead. Thereby did I console him and save Isaac from the sacrifice. So shall I set about doing and Christ the lamb shall I send, he who has never known sin. He must sojourn upon the earth and must tread the winepress alone, so that my handiwork be by his death redeemed and saved from eternal pain.

Now will I make known through the mouth of my prophets that I shall send my son. He shall enclose him-

self in the body of a virgin without human shame and my divinity shall he clothe in manhood. Pain and great need must he suffer until death for man that in hell is the first and foremost and has been long in the devil's tyranny. Now it seemeth unto me right that I free my servant. On that am I determined. I will that that be brought about by Christ's crucifixion, and that he free my creature man by dying upon the cross.

LADY CHURCH. [*To BALAAM.*] Thou first, O Balaam, say what comes to thee, who shall be thy redeemer? What are thy words?

[BALAAM, *without apparently having heard* LADY CHURCH, *steps forward from the knot of* PROPHETS *to down stage centre and prophesies.*]

BALAAM. Of Jacob's seed shall rise a joy, a beautiful lode-star that shall shine far over all the broad world. All that moves and walks shall be subject to him. His might shall pass away nevermore and nevermore. Heaven and earth shall lie all at his hand. He shall hold sway over all lands alike. Know that in truth. [BALAAM *returns to the group.*]

LADY CHURCH. [*To ISAIAH.*] Isaiah, thou friend of God, proclaim for us among all people the noble birth so good and so beautiful.

[ISAIAH *steps forward and prophesies.*]

ISAIAH. God shall perform a miracle. Before all living there shall go a child that shall be born of a virgin. She shall be so pure that the child shall come without man's cherishing. [*He steps back.*]

LADY CHURCH. [*To VIRGIL.*] O heathen man Virgil, thou also shalt give us tidings of the holy birth. Speak, what are thy words?

[VIRGIL *steps forward likewise seemingly unconscious of the bidding that controls him.*]

VIRGIL. From high heaven shall come a miraculous new birth that shall be feared by every kind of creature. Before that birth neither death nor life can endure. He shall have power to give both.

GOD. [*To GABRIEL.*] Gabriel hear me now aright. From the race of David have I long time since chosen a mother who shall, herself a virgin, bear me. The Holy Ghost shall care for that. And after the birth shall she remain a virgin pure above all women. Mary is her name. In the land of Galilee in the town of Nazareth, there shalt thou find her at her prayers.

[GABRIEL *goes. Darkness blots out the scene. The choir sings several verses of the Creator alme siderum. Then:*]

SCENE II

[*Lights half up. MARY praying. GABRIEL enters in a flood of light.*]

GABRIEL. Mary, why shakest thou so? Be of good cheer, thou pure maid; thou hast found grace of the heavenly God. Behold thou shalt conceive and bear a son and call his name Jesus.

MARY. Angel of heaven, miraculous doth it seem to me that this should ever befall me; for I have never known man.

GABRIEL. Mary, pure maid, have no fear of this. The child that thou shalt bear shall safeguard holiness.

MARY. Behold, God's handmaid am I, holy angel. Be thy sweet message done unto me, for my soul rejoices there-over.

[*Dimly in the background behind GABRIEL and MARY appears the stately figure of LADY CHURCH.*]

LADY CHURCH. Hail, thou mirror of purity, thou maidenly seal! Hail, rose of all women! Well is it for thee that thou wert ever born, thou art so elect of heaven. Thou beginning of grace, hail to thee, queen of David's kin! There shall come a joyous thing of thy body that shall purify the world. A crown shalt thou wear on the highest throne in the kingdom of heaven forever and ever.

[*Darkness.*]

SCENE III

[*Half darkness. JOSEPH stands with head bowed alone. In a flood of light GABRIEL appears to him.*]

GABRIEL. Joseph, thou of the race of David, with thine eyes shalt thou behold a bliss and joy befall the pure virgin. Turn thee about with joyous heart and take Mary into thy care. It is the Holy Ghost that shall help in this holy birth that the maid shall bring forth.

[*GABRIEL vanishes and leaves JOSEPH in the half light gazing after him. Darkness.*]

SCENE IV

[*Dim light. TWO SHEPHERDS lie sleeping on the ground. In a flood of light GABRIEL appears.*]

GABRIEL. Ye shepherds on the meadow, go. Lift up your heads and hear. I bring you glad tidings. The saviour of the world whom the angels have chosen, he is just now born. [*Vanishes.*]

[*The SHEPHERDS rise.*]

1ST SHEPHERD. Hear, little comrade, hear how in the choir of heaven the angels sing who bring the tidings that the child is born who shall make the world free! With great reverence let us go thither.

2ND SHEPHERD. We shall start out and go unto Bethlehem and make known that with great glory that same child is born whom storm and wind, heaven and earth and sea shall serve forever, even as the angel said who brought us tidings.

[They go out. Darkness.]

SCENE V

[Lights full. MARY and JOSEPH at the manger. The SHEPHERDS, together with two or three more whom they have brought with them, enter, kneel, and adore. The choir sings the Sanctus during the pantomime. Then one rises and speaks.]

1ST SHEPHERD. Rejoice greatly, my comrades. I tell you glad tidings. The message which the angel brought and spoke to us with joy to-night, this very night, that has come to pass through the power of God. For I saw the child lying in the manger.

[The SHEPHERDS start to go. A MESSENGER enters and meets them.]

MESSENGER. Ye shepherds, wherefore do ye behave so joyously? Methinks ye are gay in your hearts. Say, what have ye heard or what has come to your ears?

2ND SHEPHERD. In the throne of the angels we saw the most blessed beautiful little child that shall be Lord of all the world.

[The SHEPHERDS pass on out, leaving the MESSENGER gazing after them. Darkness.]

SCENE VI

[Half light. Enter the THREE KINGS together.]

1ST KING. This is a certain token of the king of heaven, that he is now born. Let us follow hence all three whithersoever this star leadeth us. Gold, frankincense and myrrh shall we bear to offer him and we shall speak eternal praise.

[They move across the stage and meet the MESSENGER entering. They address him.]

2ND KING. Where is he now that is born who is chosen king over all the Jewish people? A star have we spied in the land of the rising sun that hath made known to us that that child was born like whom nor before nor since so noble was ever born. Him we seek on our journey.

[The MESSENGER stares at them. Darkness.]

SCENE VII

[Lights up. HEROD centre. KNIGHTS stand about him left and right. The MESSENGER enters.]

MESSENGER. Lord, hear in thy mercy. There are come new messengers to Jerusalem town. In truth I say to thee that they add not to thy glory. Hear, king and lord. Terrible words they say, for they wish to adore a little child that is born whom the angels have chosen as emperor and lord. And they will proclaim that he shall be mighty both in heaven and on earth.

HEROD. Speak. What hast thou heard? Who is there that so shall come who may be like unto that? How shall he overthrow me and drive me from my throne? By my crown!

1ST KNIGHT. Thou shalt not send away, my lord, the messengers that are come here and who come to court, until thou hast heard what they have done. So mayst thou with thy might drive away this king and remain king thyself.

HEROD. I command thee then that thou order them to come thus before me, that I may hear of this from them. This seemeth to me the errand of a fool.

[*The KNIGHT goes out. Darkness.*]

SCENE VIII

[*Lights up. The KNIGHT meets the THREE KINGS and addresses them.*]

KNIGHT. God greet you, lords, all three. Will ye know what is befallen? Herod, my lord, sends you tidings, asking that ye shall come to court. For gladly would my lord hear why ye are come hither. That is his heart's desire.

3RD KING. Gladly will we come to court in honor of the emperor and tell him why and wherefore (if it is of any help to him) we are come.

[*Exeunt. Darkness.*]

SCENE IX

[*Lights up. HEROD centre surrounded as before by KNIGHTS. The FIRST KNIGHT enters and bows. Then the THREE KINGS enter and bow.*]

KINGS. [*Together.*] O king, live forever!

HEROD. My grace salutes you.

1ST KING. Hail to thee noble king! Thy praise and glory must forever increase.

HEROD. Ye kings, be welcome to me. My mercy be with you. I know not whence any of you cometh nor what hath brought you hither. That, my lords, shall ye tell me.

1ST KING. Emperor and potent lord who hast asked tidings of us, who we are and wherefore we come, that shalt thou hear shortly. Arabia, that wealthy land, lies all at my hand and whatever there rides or walks is ready to serve me.

2ND KING. All the land of Tarsus and many a wise hero are subject to me. I am lord of them all.

3RD KING. All the kingdom of Chaldæa have I subjected with power to my hand, both old and young. And these lords that stand here are subject and my vassals. Now know thou, emperor, who we are. And also shall we make clear to thee wherefore we are come hither. Isaiah and Virgil and other prophets have written of the life of a child. Him we seek sore from our hearts and we go to look for him.

HEROD. Ye lords that call yourselves kings, say whereby ye learned that that child was now born. What is come to your ears or what have ye heard? And who is it that shall come?

1ST KING. In the far lands of the east we saw a star. Thereby did we know that there now is born in the land a child so noble that never was his like, nor ever will be, as our wisdom teaches us.

HEROD. Ye lords that are come before me, ask after this child of whom ye have heard. Then whatever ye find, that shall ye tell unto me. My offering I wish to bear unto him and after your fashion shall I adore him.

[*The KINGS bow and go. Darkness.*]

SCENE X

[*Lights brilliant. MARY and JOSEPH as in Scene V. The KINGS enter, kneel and adore. The choir sings Hodie Christus natus est. Then:*]

1ST KING. Queen Mary, noble and free, we bring thee gifts in praise of thy child. To him are we subject. Lovingly shalt thou receive them.

[*They offer their gifts one after the other.*]

MARY. Well shall it be for you ever, that ye would seek me out, to honor my child, hither into this foreign land, far from out a strange country, and have shown me this honor.

3RD KING. Lady, in thine honor shall we depart hence.

[*They rise and start to go. GABRIEL appears in their path.*]

GABRIEL. Ye lords, hear me and understand. I counsel you that ye go not the same way by which ye came. For I am sent hither for your safety from afar from the high heavenly kingdom. [*Disappears.*]

[*The KINGS bow and go out by the other side of the stage. Darkness.*]

SCENE XI

[*Lights up. HEROD centre with the KNIGHTS about him. The MESSENGER enters.*]

MESSENGER. Lord, in thy graciousness art thou now betrayed. They that called themselves kings have returned into their land by another way than they came, for they heard that you wished to take them captive and destroy them. Now must the king remain who shall drive you from your throne.

2ND KNIGHT. O king, hail to thy graciousness! I shall advise thee well how thou shalt with thy power destroy him who hath dared, if thou heedest not my counsel, to remain king and to drive thee with power from thy throne.

HEROD. I will follow thine advice in all things soever and give thee in reward my golden crown.

2ND KNIGHT. Lord, send thou thy knights far and wide to all the ends of thy kingdom and have all the children slain that may be found who are under two years old. It can never happen that the child should not be among them, of whom so many prophecies have long since spoken. So bidest thou in thy might.

HEROD. Thou hast advised me well. Up knights and messengers! Put to death all children that are under two years old.

[*The COMPANY go out leaving HEROD alone. Darkness.*]

SCENE XII

[*Dim light. JOSEPH and MARY sleeping. GABRIEL comes in the dimness and speaks to JOSEPH.*]

GABRIEL. Joseph, take Mary in thy care and her child and flee thou thither where they are known to none, to the land of Egypt. And so long shalt you be there until Herod be dead.

[*GABRIEL vanishes. JOSEPH rises and wakens MARY and they flee, MARY bearing the CHILD.*]

SCENE XIII

[*Lights up. RACHEL and others with their children. The KNIGHTS OF HEROD appear in the back. The WOMEN turn back to the audience to face them defending their chil-*

dren which are in spite of them slaughtered by the SOLDIERS.]

RACHEL. Arms! What shall befall me at the hands of them whom I see coming hitherward so fast? What mean their reddened swords and their fearsome mien? Full sore do I wonder wherefore they run hither or what they think to do.

[The KNIGHTS seize the children.]

1ST KNIGHT. Give here thy child, bold woman, if thou wilt keep thy life. For I must slay it in the king's need.

[The children are slain and the KNIGHTS go on our right and left. The WOMEN bow to the ground over their dead. RACHEL who kneels to one side over her slaughtered child raises her arms to heaven crying:]

RACHEL. Lord God of heaven, now must this sorrowful death of my dear child be before thine eyes. *[Calmer.]* But now I will gladly let my impatience bide. For they wished to kill Jesus, thy dear son, of whom King Solomon long ago hath spoken. May he for this reward well my child and me. Dear Lord, this do I ask of thee.

[RACHEL holds her arms upward in prayer. At the back appears slowly the compassionate figure of MARY; and long and lovingly MARY looks down on the destitute RACHEL. Then slowly RACHEL holds her slain child out to MARY, raising it higher and higher. MARY steps down and takes the child in her arms. Softly the choir commences the Kyrie Eleison. The lights go out and the chant swells slightly louder then dies out gently in the darkness.]

THE STAR

[THE BILSEN PLAY]

CAST

PRIEST, the Prologue

GABRIEL

FIRST SHEPHERD

TWO OTHER SHEPHERDS (mute)

THE THREE WISEMEN from Tarsus, Arabia, Chaldæa

HEROD

HEROD'S MESSENGER

TWO COURTIER

HEROD'S ARMOR-BEARER

THREE SCRIBES (two mute)

TWO MIDWIVES

MARY (mute)

JOSEPH (mute)

THREE PAGES (mute)

CHANTS USED

Gloria in Excelsis

Pange Lingua

THE STAR

[THE BILSEN PLAY]

SCENE I

[Lights medium bright. One dressed as a PRIEST enters centre back and bows to the audience and addresses them in a rich vibrant voice.]

PRIEST. Hail! Let us rejoice! This day, each year, bringeth praises of the king. This light bringeth that for which the mind of man dare not hope. Verily it bringeth joy to thousands of them that believe and a king it bringeth to his kingdom and peace it bringeth unto the earth. Hail! Let us rejoice. It is fitting that he reign and that he hold the sceptre of the kingdom. The name of king he loves, for he adorns that name with graciousness. Over the land of David shall he sit and over David's kingdom shall he reign even forever. Praise be to the Lord!

[Which is answered by a reverent "Amen" spoken back-stage by many voices.]

SCENE II

[The chorus chants the Gloria in excelsis throughout the scene. Semi-darkness. SHEPHERDS asleep. The angel GABRIEL appears up right in a flood of light and the SHEPHERDS rise to their knees to see him.]

GABRIEL. Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born

this day in the city of David a saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

[*Exit.*]

[*The Gloria continues. The SHEPHERDS hearken. Then while it still continues, one among them rises and speaks to the others.*]

1ST SHEPHERD. Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass which the Lord hath made known to us.

[*The SHEPHERDS rise and reverently go out at the back hearkening to the last phrases of the Gloria as they go.*]

SCENE III

[*Twilight. The THREE WISEMEN enter from divers directions, meeting. They bow in courtly fashion, one to another, then look toward the right front as at the star, which is invisible.*]

1ST WISEMAN. The star shines resplendent with great light—

2ND WISEMAN. Which shows that the king of kings is born—

3RD WISEMAN. Of whose coming the prophecies of old bear witness.

[*They approach one another and salute one another with kisses.*]

1ST WISEMAN. Following where this star leads us, do we go thither where the place is of his birth.

[*They go out together down right.*]

SCENE IV

[*Twilight. The WISEMEN enter up right, meeting HEROD'S MESSENGER who comes in quickly down left.*]

MESSENGER. The king's command summons you. Go, nor be ye sluggish in your going.

2ND WISEMAN. What king is he who thus summons us through thee and bids us come to him?

[*The MESSENGER whips out his sword and threatens them. A gesture from one of the WISEMEN that they are come in peace causes him to let his sword fall to his side. Watching them closely, the MESSENGER replies.*]

MESSENGER. It is the king who holds the whole world in his sway.

3RD WISEMAN. Let us too see this king who of all kings is thus so masterful.

MESSENGER. Come then with me.

[*Exeunt down left.*]

SCENE V

[*Daylight. HEROD standing centre back. An ARMOR-BEARER stands at HEROD'S side. The MESSENGER hastens in down left and bows before HEROD.*]

MESSENGER. O king, live forever, thou who art worthy of eternal life.

HEROD. What thing is now come to pass? My mercy be thy reward. What tidings dost thou bring?

MESSENGER. Hard tidings I bring back, O king. The forebodings of the prophet are come true.

HEROD. What are the forebodings of the prophet?

MESSENGER. There are with us, lord, three unknown men from the east seeking some new-born king.

[*A COURTIER enters hurriedly down right.*]

COURTIER. King! King! King! King! The songs of the prophets show that a king is born; the light in the sky makes manifest that he is born, born of a virgin, O king!

[*A SECOND COURTIER enters down left.*]

2ND COURTIER. Lo! Wisemen are come and seek, a star their guide, the king of kings who is born. Their gifts they bear to the king who is lord over all things.

HEROD. [*To ARMOR-BEARER.*] Command them to come before me, that I may know these things from each, who they are, why they come, and with what tidings they seek us.

[*The ARMOR-BEARER goes down left and meets the WISEMEN entering. He bows to them, turns and conducts them into HEROD'S presence, bows to HEROD and the WISEMEN, and stands in attendance down left. The COURTIERs and MESSENGER are down right.*]

1ST WISEMAN. Health to thee, thou emperor of the Jews!

HEROD. What is the cause of your journey? Who are ye? Whence do ye come? Tell us.

2ND WISEMAN. A king's birth is the cause of our journey. We are kings of Arabia, come hither to seek the king of kings.

HEROD. What king do ye seek? By what token did ye learn that he was born?

3RD WISEMAN. In the east we learned that he was born and yon star made it known to us. [*He points down right with his staff at the unseen star.*]

HEROD. [*His hand clutching his sword.*] Tell me, do ye believe that he shall reign?

1ST WISEMAN. [*Calmly.*] Knowing that he shall reign, we come from a distant land with mystic gifts to adore him.

[*They show their gifts.*]

1ST WISEMAN. The king with gold.

2ND WISEMAN. The priest with frankincense.

3RD WISEMAN. The man with myrrh.

[*HEROD claps his hands savagely, and the ARMOR-BEARER steps forward.*]

HEROD. [*To the ARMOR-BEARER.*] Cast these three men into prison.

[*The WISEMEN bow their heads and go out meekly down right, followed by the ARMOR-BEARER. HEROD summons the MESSENGER to him.*]

HEROD. Hither my messenger. Call to me my scribes, well read in the writings of the prophets.

[*The MESSENGER, going down left, meets the SCRIBES to whom he bows and speaks.*]

MESSENGER. O ye learned in the law, ye are summoned by the king. Come hastily with the writings of the prophets.

[*MESSENGER and SCRIBES bow to each other, then the MESSENGER leads them into HEROD'S presence and again stands in attendance down right, with the other COURT-IERS.*]

THE SCRIBES. Hail!

HEROD. O Scribes, tell me, I bid you, if ye see anything concerning this new-born child written in your books.

1ST SCRIBE. I see, O lord, by the writings of the prophets,

that Christ is born in Bethlehem in the city of David. So have the prophets foretold it.

HEROD. Show me the books. [*He looks and gives them back with a bitter gesture.*] My messenger, hither. Fetch the three kings before me from their prison.

[*The MESSENGER goes down left and returns followed by the THREE KINGS and the ARMOR-BEARER. HEROD turns on the WISEMEN with a bearing partly tyrannical, partly fearful.*]

HEROD. Thou shalt answer me, thou who standest first in line. Speak. Thou, then, whence art thou?

1ST WISEMAN. The land of Tarsus blooms under my, Zoroaster's, kingship.

HEROD. Thou next, and whence art thou?

2ND WISEMAN. The Arabs fear and obey me faithfully.

HEROD. And thou?

3RD WISEMAN. I am emperor of the Chaldees, and am king over all them that dwell there.

[*At HEROD'S gesture, the WISEMEN stand to one side. The ARMOR-BEARER, in answer to HEROD'S summoning gesture, steps up to him.*]

HEROD. Even as thou shalt counsel will I use these men. Give me thy counsel how I shall do with them.

ARMOR-BEARER. Hear what thou shalt do, O king. Few words shall I speak but apt. Give gifts to these kings and send them hence nor let them tarry; and when they have found this new-born king whom they seek, O Lord, bid them return through thy kingdom, that thou too mayst know what and whom they adore.

[*HEROD, by clapping his hands, summons THREE PAGES, each bearing a gift. HEROD takes them from the PAGES*

and presents one each to the THREE KINGS, who each in turn acknowledge the gift with a bow.]

HEROD. Go ye and seek diligently after the child ; and when ye have found him, come ye back here and tell me where he lies.

[The WISEMEN bow and go down left.]

1ST WISEMAN. Let us go and seek him and offer him our gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

[They go out down left.]

SCENE VI

[Twilight. The THREE WISEMEN enter down left and gaze up at the unseen star.]

1ST WISEMAN. Behold the star!

2ND WISEMAN. Behold the star!

3RD WISEMAN. Behold the star!

1ST WISEMAN. The star, seen before in the east, which Balaam of Jewish race foretold would rise, again goes clear before us. We shall not leave it until it has led us to the cradle of the king.

[The SHEPHERDS enter down right and one among them speaks.]

1ST SHEPHERD. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.

2ND WISEMAN. Shepherds, say, what have ye seen, that ye proclaim that Christ is born?

1ST SHEPHERD. We have seen the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and choirs of angels praising the saviour.

[The SHEPHERDS go out back. The WISEMEN stand still.]

3RD WISEMAN. *[With a thrilling joy in his voice.]* Glory

to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men!

[*They go out down right following the unseen star.*]

SCENE VII

[*The background is closed off. Lights full up. The chorus chants the Pange Lingua throughout. Enter the WISEMEN down right. The MIDWIVES stand down left.*]

1ST WISEMAN. Lo! We ask you to open to us the holy bars of this house, that we may worship with our gifts which we have vowed him, the king whom a star of sovereignty made known to us, which outshines all stars.

1ST MIDWIFE. Who are these whom the star leads, coming to us bearing strange things?

2ND WISEMAN. We whom ye see are kings of Tarsus and of Arabia and of Saba, bearing gifts to Christ the king and new-born lord, whom, the star leading, we come to adore.

2ND MIDWIFE. Behold the child is here whom ye seek. Hasten ye now, adore him, for he is the redeemer of the world.

[*The MIDWIVES open the doors, revealing the holy family grouped around the manger adoring the child. The Pange Lingua swells louder and then dies down when the WISEMEN speak.*]

1ST WISEMAN. Hail, prince of the ages!

2ND WISEMAN. Hail, prince of the ages!

3RD WISEMAN. Hail, prince of the ages!

1ST WISEMAN. Accept, O king, gold. [*Presents gift.*]

2ND WISEMAN. Take thou frankincense, thou that art truly God. [*Presents gift.*]

3RD WISEMAN. Myrrh, token of mortality. [*Presents gift.*]

[*The WISEMEN kneel in adoration. Again the Pange Lingua swells out loudly. The WISEMEN rise and start to leave down right. GABRIEL appears before them.*]

GABRIEL. Fulfilled are all things which were foretold by the prophets. Go, return by another way, lest, bearing tidings of this so great king, ye be punished. [*Exit.*]

[*The WISEMEN turn and again face the holy family.*]

1ST WISEMAN. O king of heaven, who art thus attended, praise be to thee! In a stable art thou cradled, thou who holdest the world. Thou liest in a manger and art king in heaven. Lord, I have heard thy story and am afraid; I have considered thy handiworks and am terrified. O thou who liest among the beasts praise be to thee!

[*The WISEMEN go slowly out down left. The Pange Lingua swells out louder and louder and then is still.*]

THE UMBRIAN PLAY

CAST

MARY
JOSEPH
THREE SHEPHERDS
ISAIAH
DAVID
GABRIEL
OTHER ANGELS *and* SHEPHERDS
THREE KINGS
HEROD
PRIESTS OF HEROD
CITIZENS OF JERUSALEM
SOLDIERS OF HEROD

CHANTS USED

Creator alme siderum
Sanctus
Gloria in excelsis
Hodie Christus natus est
Kyrie Eleison

THE UMBRIAN PLAY

SCENE I

[*Darkness. MARY and JOSEPH enter at the back, JOSEPH bearing a lantern. SHEPHERDS are grouped down right leaning on their staves, watching, their faces lit up by the lanterns that stand at their feet.*]

MARY. Joseph, my dear spouse, regard thy companion Mary: traveling is difficult for me. Willingly would I lay me down awhile.

JOSEPH. Now who will tell me of a place where we may lodge? Shepherds, I wish to pray you in kindness that I be directed by you. We are in need of a place where we may stay. And the gates of Bethlehem are closed. We cannot enter there.

1ST SHEPHERD. We cannot in this night point out to you house or hut. Up yonder is a shed. In bad weather we have lodged there.

JOSEPH. [*To MARY.*] Come. This night we are as the ox and ass. There will we stay for we have no other house. We are used to poverty and to great need. Therefore in humility let us thank the blessed Lord God.

MARY. [*Gazing upward.*] O eternal father, how infinite is thy humility. I feel gay and sing for of my body wouldst thou be born. And they have told me of it thus, saying that there is no bed where I may lay me down. Mournful am I that I am so alone with only Joseph by me.

[MARY and JOSEPH go out down left. The SHEPHERDS go out centre turning back to look after the pair.]

SCENE II

[Brilliant light. A hidden chorus sings gently throughout the scene: Creator alme siderum. ISAIAH and DAVID stand statue-still to right and left and utter their prophecies in a slow even voice.]

ISAIAH. Be it pleasing to the blessed God to rend the heavens and to descend unto earth, to assume the flesh of man; for long have we sighed for it.

DAVID. My glorious father, thou art the truth that cannot fail. See thou me stand thoughtful when thou art to come to save us and fearest not to say, "David, the seed of thy noble loins shall I place on my throne in token that of thy lineage shall I be made man." Thou didst swear to me in truth. Thou must not fail thy holy promise. O divine majesty, to-day thou art about to become man. Take upon thyself human form. In pity mitigate thy fury. And send to the sinner thy so much desired son.

ISAIAH. High Lord, hear now thy prophet by name Isaiah. Thou knowest that in my prophecies thou wouldst that I make announcement for thee, that men should see thee with their mortal eyes on earth clad in our flesh. Now may it please thee to-day to bring to pass that which I have prophesied. Send the dew from the heavens. May the clouds give birth to the just redeemer even as they give birth to rain. Of fertile earth, even of a virgin shall be born the saviour. Regard O God the fervor with which the holy fathers have awaited thee, that the ban might be raised by which each is confined.

DAVID. Excite thy power. Come to liberate us thy creatures. The world is in great need. Therefore may it please thee

to delay no longer. Come, pure majesty, come that our waiting be no longer. Deign to become a man and give light to this enshadowed world.

[*Darkness.*]

SCENE III

[*Lights bright. MARY leaning over the manger; JOSEPH standing to one side. The hidden chorus sings the Sanctus. Then MARY speaks in the ensuing silence.*]

MARY. My little son, thou to whom I have but now given birth in such poverty and in a place so abandoned, thy father thus hath sent thee. Therefore I take the cloth from my head that I may wrap thee. Ah woe is me that I am so alone: only Joseph has remained by me.

SCENE IV

[*Semi-darkness. SHEPHERDS lie asleep. A spot-light directed toward the back of the stage, comes up slowly, revealing a group of ANGELS banked in the background in a large unordered group. One ANGEL, raising his arm, speaks to the SHEPHERDS who half rise, shade their eyes and watch.*]

ANGEL. Shepherds, ye who watch over your flocks in this place, lift up your eyes. For I am the angel of the eternal mansion. I bring to you tidings, and great joy do I announce to you. For the little Jesus is born, the son of God sent to redeem us. And a sign of this I give unto you that in a lowly stall the poor babe is born, nor doth he disdain to lie between the ox and ass. In a miserable little cloth hath his mother laid him in the manger. Of hay is his coverlet, so humbly is he come to earth.

Glory to God the faithful that hath made unto the

world a so noble gift. On earth peace be to men since that he is born to-day to save mankind.

[*The choir starts singings the Gloria in excelsis. The lights on the ANGELS go out.*]

1ST SHEPHERD. Let us go thither at once and see this word that we hear. To Bethlehem let us go to adore this babe new-born.

[*They go out. Darkness. The Gloria continues to an end.*]

SCENE V

[*Lights full up. MARY and JOSEPH on either side of the manger. If feasible, images of an ox and ass back of the manger. The SHEPHERDS enter down left, seeking the manger.*]

1ST SHEPHERD. Lord, thou art descended from heaven to earth even as the angel said. Thy heart hast thou kindled for us, to lie in a so lowly stable. Let us find this stable that we may see thee clad in human flesh. O sovereign stable, where there lies he who has created the world.

[*They come before the manger and kneel.*]

2ND SHEPHERD. Behold this little stall. See the babe lie here poor. The blessed virgin has neither cloth nor binding cloth to bind him. Joseph cannot help, he is so collapsed because of his great old age. To poverty he accustoms himself, he who is lord without superior.

3RD SHEPHERD. The cradle where he thus lies is the manger of penitence. Yet another thing, the ox and the ass do him reverence and provide for him even as the holy Isaiah proclaimed it. They acknowledge his sovereignty and recognise that he is the blessed Lord God.

MARY. I am bound to render honor and eternal glory to God the father, thinking that I am mother of his son, he

who is the eternal God. And great is the supernal joy of guarding and embracing thy so dear son, he who is beautiful above all lilies, who hath of himself caused my heart to beat faster.

But when I consider how impoverished I am, the joy is paid with plaint and sadness of heart, for my weeping son hath neither bed nor clothes that I may change him. O ye shepherds who are come, have ye brought me any clothes?

1ST SHEPHERD. When the angel spoke to us, my lady, the news of this child, he described him poor, and that the babe lay lowly. We set out at once. Therefore we are provided with no other clothes. O woe! how great a hurt, that the saviour be thus unaccompanied!

2ND SHEPHERD. Now how is this, my lady, that thou hast given birth in such poverty? Nor sheet nor gown, hast thou to clothe so great worthiness? O high majesty, where are the protectors to quiet thee and the bath they prepare for thee? We have no help at all.

MARY. Thy poor mother, O son, cannot give thee these caresses. House have I not nor room, nor protectors who shall make thee caresses of love. Thy little body is accustomed quickly to lying harsh and hard! [*To SHEPHERDS.*] I wish to make it known to you, that by you it be testified to.

3RD SHEPHERD. [*To MARY.*] Joseph, the aged man, whom thou didst receive for thy protector, cannot help the child but close to thee looks with pity upon thee. We believe that his heart burns with a fire of love on beholding this, meditating within himself on the high benefit that is given to man.

MARY. Joseph, my dear spouse, he who would gladly help me, is so heavy with age that he cannot help poor Mary.

But he keeps me company when I have here no other than two beasts. If thou wish another pillow, son, I have found here none other than the hay.

1ST SHEPHERD. Where are the riches of the high glory whence thou art descended? Thou hast humbled thyself, thou who art king of the high paradise. Thou hast assumed the form of man for thou wishest to save him from hell. Thou art the supernal God, yet thou hast assumed flesh and hast made thyself man.

2ND SHEPHERD. O ye people who are come hither, now press ye close to this poor place. Mary, that is new-delivered there, hath nor bed, nor splendor, nor fire, but only a little straw. The babe she holds naked. Brethren who are now here, let each one make plaint out of love for him.

3RD SHEPHERD. Behold the company of the ox and ass are present. The virgin Mary, between the two she lays him so lowly and is so poorly off that we cannot say nor tell it. Indeed the child is to be wept for, in such great poverty have we found him.

1ST SHEPHERD. Accept our mantles. And do not refuse, O holy mother, the poor clothing such as is in the woods with the whole flock. Clothe thy son that his pure flesh be not chapped with cold. Mary, now take thou care of this child that is new-born.

2ND SHEPHERD. We shall go content if we could but touch him. This we pray thee, for we are shepherds of lowly station.

MARY. I wish to console you, that ye may return joyous to your flocks. He hath humbled himself in order that the servant be recompensed.

3RD SHEPHERD. Praise and glory and honor be to thee, all powerful king of heaven, who to-day hast shown to lowly

shepherds thy weeping son. We shall tell it to all people, for we believe the holy birth. And in thy humility hast thou made thyself kinsman to thy servant.

1ST SHEPHERD. [*To the audience.*] We have seen this Word, who lies for us in piteous humility. See the fresh rose plucked in the celestial garden. For you is he made mortal. Between two beasts hath he humbled himself. Blush, O proud one, that ever seeketh the easy life.

2ND SHEPHERD. Such bare poverty no woman that ever bore experienced. Woe be to thee, O Judah, who hast not in pity gone to Mary. Think that she had but a sack, the blessed virgin, nor bed, nor covering, nor fire to warm the air so cold.

3RD SHEPHERD. Now be thou confounded, O avaricious one who art not satisfied with collecting money. His so dear son hath God sent to a house so ungarnished. Correct thy life and let the son of God bear fruit in thee, he who so humbles himself. In so great poverty have we left him!

1ST SHEPHERD. Thou hadst no house, my lady, wherein thou mightest enter to give birth: In the common road thou stayedst, thus anyone could come to thee. Now what more is to be said? In God's name, brethren, let us all be virtuous and no more make excuses for ourselves, for the church hath here represented him.

2ND SHEPHERD. Lord, since thou hast deigned to be born to-day so poorly, give light to all people, that no man be ungrateful for such a gift.

[*Darkness.*]

SCENE VI

[*Blue lights. The KINGS enter together.*]

1ST KING. The king of heaven is born. Behold the star

that was to come. Let us go to see this eternal word that is born to us.

2ND KING. If the prophet speaks true, in poverty is this babe born. Let us bear him gifts that the little child be succored. Let us set out on our journey and give thanks unto the high heavenly king that he hath made manifest to us the birth of his eternal son.

3RD. KING. The journey is far and never have we traversed those lands. Whither do we turn to go to visit that majesty?

1ST KING. He by his goodness and his pity will make known to us the way. The star goeth before. Let us follow it until we shall have found him.

[*Darkness.*]

SCENE VII

[*Lights up. CITIZENS of Jerusalem to right and left. The KINGS enter at the back.*]

2ND KING. Behold the city that hath long been royal. Let us enter here to see where we should spend the day. [*To the CITIZENS.*] However it is undeserved, in God's name, sirs, we ask of you a favor. We would learn of you where lies the king of the Jews who is just now born.

[*Pause.*]

ONE CITIZEN. Ye must pardon us, but we know not of what ye speak. Go unto our lord and he will disclose the matter to you, he who ever has with him a wise counselor or a doctor of the law, through whom the ruling is done and by whom the people is administered.

3RD KING. We wish it be your pleasure for a little to trouble yourselves with this undertaking. For we are not of this place. To this land we have never been accustomed.

We wish you to go to the king to tell him that we are here.

CITIZEN. We are full content to do according to your asking.

[*One or two CITIZENS detach themselves from the group and leave lower right. The KINGS start to follow. Darkness.*]

SCENE VIII

[*Lights full up. HEROD centre. CITIZENS enter down right.*]

CITIZEN. Lord, there are come three pilgrims with great company traveling through the land. Each asks that in kindness he be shown the way to where lies he who is born the king of the Jews. And we had to tell them we knew not where he lies.

HEROD. Have them come before me. And go ye for the priests and all the number of the doctors. Opportunely are these devout lords come.

[*The CITIZENS go down right. The KINGS enter presently where the CITIZENS went out and bow before HEROD.*]

HEROD. Wherefore are ye come, ye from far lands, and what is it that ye do?

1ST KING. Lord, we seek the king of kings who is now born.

2ND KING. A star we saw in the east of great clearness: then we knew that there was given us the Lord so noble. Wherefore with great fervor we departed and set out upon our journey. And we have lost the way: hence each of us is greatly troubled.

[*The FIRST KING approaches the back. The crowd parts. PROPHETS enter and bow to HEROD.*]

HEROD. [*To KINGS.*] I have no news of this. Stand aside for I wish to consult concerning it.

[*The KINGS go down left and talk among themselves.*
HEROD *turns to the PRIESTS.*]

HEROD. This is bad news. Consider, lords, what is to be done. Should this king raise himself above me, it shall fare ill with you.

1ST PRIEST. Lord, thou sayst true: in truth he is to be born.

2ND PRIEST. We find by the scripture he is in truth to be born in Bethlehem. Of this take care, when the star appears in the east, made manifest unto the wisemen, to show to them the country and the place. But let them delay a little, and let them return through thy land when he shall have been found.

3RD PRIEST. During that time let us consider his death, that he no longer live, and if it be necessary, let us go. Who finds him first shall kill him first: in this let each be Jew with heart and mouth and hand.

HEROD. This is a sovereign thought. As ye have said, so let it be decided. [*He turns to the KINGS.*] When did ye depart and when did the star appear to you in the east?

3RD KING. The days are these: in truth it is thirteen days to-day. We come devoutly to adore him, if we can find him. We shall never cease to seek him until he be shown to us.

HEROD. Indeed ye are welcome. I hold most dear that devotion which ye show for this king of so great a country. I say to you that in Bethlehem shall his mansion be, as it appears. Go ye and find him. This is the road which I show unto you. When ye have found him and are sure that it is he, return through my kingdom, or send a special messenger of your own, for I wish to come and adore him together with you.

1ST KING. Farewell, mighty lord! A thousand thanks for that which thou hast shown us.

[*They go down left. Darkness.*]

SCENE IX

[*Blue lights. The back of the stage is closed off by the standing figures of SHEPHERDS. The KINGS enter down left.*]

2ND KING. Be comforted, each. Behold the star that shall lead us onward. Let us each be more in accord to adore God and all the Saints. His virtues are so great that he mindeth not our misdeeds, for he wishes to show unto us his son whom he hath sent below for us.

3RD KING. The star hath ceased to move. Above that shed, see, it hath stopped. Go thou and enter there, and that which is said, go, see, and hearken.

[*The FIRST KING approaches the back. The crowd parts and discloses the holy family grouped about the manger as in Scene V, The KING falls to his knees. The lights come up full. The choir starts to sing Hodie Christus natus est and continues softly to the end of the scene.*]

1ST KING. Lord, great poverty have I found about a manger: a woman new-delivered with an infant and an old man at her side.

[*The other KINGS have approached and knelt in worship.*]

2ND KING. This is our Lord, creator of heaven and earth. We adore thee, O thou redeemer, descended unto us out of God's pity. O great eternal goodness fired with love that makes thee embody thyself, that hath made thee to humble thyself to receive death for the sins of others.

3RD KING. We marvel that in this lowly place lieth the

Lord of the world. By faith do we know that he is the son of God, the joyous Father.

MARY. Lords, I answer you. It is come to pass according to his will. For the example of humility doth he wish to give unto you and unto each one that is born. In this poverty, because of his humility, my son is born. Ye marvel at the place, how out of the way it is, where he was laid. In hay is he swaddled, for I had not even a shirt. His body have I covered with the cloth which I took from my head. As it pleased the high father, there then appeared poor shepherds. Nothing had they to give me, had they not removed their cloaks. My sweet little boy I wrapped in these clothes. Since then hath no other gift been brought to me.

1ST KING. O heavenly father, how hast thou permitted such poverty, that thy mother hath neither bed nor covering for thy son? In the streets in a lowly stable, so out of the way is he. Neither friend nor kinsman is there here, Lord, who have accompanied him.

2ND KING. Lord, disdain not the little gift which we bring thee. And thou, benign mother, receive it for him, we pray thee; gold and frankincense we give thee, to make amends for this poverty and this place, and of myrrh a little, that his body be well preserved.

MARY. Lord, be thou praised, thou who desertest never those who believe on thee. O sweet my son, regard these wisemen and their faith, that in their goodness are come hither to visit thee, who have willed to give thee incense and myrrh and pure gold. Lord, thou seest and feelest, howso he will not show it, who serves thee from his heart. I pray thee dearly that thy glory serve these wisemen, preserve them in this world in peace and wealth and love, and by me, dear lord, in all that I can, shalt thou be rewarded.

3RD KING. O Lord, to visit whom we are come from a distant land, please to show unto us how we shall return home, if in secret or openly.

[*The KINGS bow and turn down left. In their path an ANGEL appears.*]

ANGEL. Your prayers are heard. Beware that ye go not toward Herod, but return ye each to your country by another way.

[*The ANGEL disappears down right and the KINGS follow. Darkness.*]

SCENE X

[*Lights up. HEROD centre. COUNCILLORS, PRIESTS and SOLDIERS to either side.*]

HEROD. Their loyal kingly promise to us the wisemen have observed not. They have returned not. They have sent neither ambassador nor messenger hither. [*To the COUNCILLORS.*] I know not what to do unless your counsel help me. O ye who are peerless wise, the hope of the wisemen has failed us. Under pain of death shall ye tell me some remedy, how I may put to death this child that ye say is born.

1ST PRIEST. Let the remedy be this. Put to death all men children even up to two years of age, that Christ too die. Let none escape. For certain shall the babe be among them.

HEROD. Effect this slaughter, for verily hast thou advised the best. Go ye at once unto Bethlehem and unto all the coasts thereof, and whatsoever babes are born, put them cruelly to death.

1ST PRINCE. [*To the SOLDIERS.*] Go hastily, and if the mothers hold them to their breasts, act with the more effect. Let none be hidden that is not slaughtered.

1ST SOLDIER. Lord, thy command shall be performed and also thy counsel. Since they are under ban, let us go to kill them, and let each one do his best.

[*Darkness.*]

SCENE XI

[*Semi-darkness. MARY, holding the CHILD, centre. Down right JOSEPH sits asleep.*]

MARY. O dear sweet my son, of me art thou born now in such poverty. Joseph, the aged man, he who is thy protector, hath fallen asleep.

[*In the half light down right an ANGEL appears and speaks to JOSEPH.*]

ANGEL. Joseph, thou aged man, rise to thy feet nor be thou negligent. With great mournfulness shalt thou give at once this message unto Mary: that Herod hath in his falseness thought to kill Christ Jesus. Flee with the child unto Egypt, go quickly that he be not found. Herod seeketh by every means to kill the child, and already is he under ban. Therefore bestir thyself and leave this place. Joseph, rise up. Take Mary and the little child and flee. In Egypt bide until I be sent to thee.

[*The ANGEL vanishes down right. JOSEPH slowly rises and turns to MARY.*]

JOSEPH. My lady, an angel came to me and hath spoken cruel tidings unto me. Therefore bestir thyself and come, nor delay thou longer in this stable. Let us depart hence, for already is it ordered that the child be put to death.

MARY. O my dear beautiful child, what hast thou done that thou art stolen from me? Wandering by night, as I never yet have done, must I go forth. [MARY rises and stares before her.]

JOSEPH. Be not so amazed.

MARY. Alas! O woe! I know not what to do. Thou canst not help me, O sweet my spouse, because of thine old age. Alas! Quickly doth my little son accustom himself to being sent away. It is but a little time since thou wert born. Thou dost not talk nor walk upon the roads. Never hast thou done sin. Why do they wish to kill thee, thou my life? O sweet my hope, I go in flight into a new country, knowing not, my son, whither I go, to save thee that thou be not stolen from me.

[*Very slowly MARY turns and goes out down left followed by JOSEPH.*]

SCENE XII

[*Lights up. At back, a tree with fruit upon it. MARY and JOSEPH enter down left preceded by an ANGEL who takes up his position centre back.*]

JOSEPH. O blessed virgin, chosen mother of this beautiful son! Be not in so great haste. Sit thou here a little and put down the child. I too, that am so old and weary, shall lay me down a while. Dear angel, pause a little, thou who hast guided us.

ANGEL. Here is a great fountain. Go ye thither and lay you down there now. For that the way is strange to you, comfort yourselves a little with these fruits.

[*MARY and JOSEPH sit down before the ANGEL. The ANGEL raises his hand and bends the tree before them.*]

JOSEPH. Behold, benign mother, this tree that bendeth down and doth thee reverence. Gather of it, out of love for me. Regard thy son that hath fallen asleep.

MARY. Glory be to thee, thou God, that hast provided for our weariness. And also to my son for whom we flee and

who ever is sent away. Son, what durance do I see thee suffer, and yet thou art so little. Joseph, the aged man, can scarce carry out my plan concerning thee.—Always is he cried out to, my so little son.

JOSEPH. Awake thy son. With these apples comfort him somewhat.

MARY. He is so little that he cannot as yet eat of them. Son, thy father calls thee. Go now to him who hath so labored for thee. Now do I wish to satisfy thee, since each branch bows itself to him. [*MARY gives the CHILD to JOSEPH.*]

JOSEPH. My son, come to me that thy mother may rest a while.

MARY. Joseph, hold him now with care, this son that I have so travailed for.

JOSEPH. I stand in fear and plaint and there is nothing that is of help to me, because of my fear of Herod or of his people, him that hath sent us away. Let us go to some place where we may save thy weeping son. [*JOSEPH gives the CHILD to MARY.*]

MARY. Joseph, dear my spouse, rise up in God's name. Let us go on at once.

JOSEPH. I am heavy-hearted, old, poor, infirm and sad. O suffering I!

MARY. O my weeping son we must flee to save thee.

[*JOSEPH rises.*]

JOSEPH. Mary, doubt not. Let us go on, following this angel that hath guided us hither.

[*MARY rises and raises her eyes to heaven.*]

MARY. My glorious father, please thou to provide for my son. He is thy dear son. Help him, succor him, an it please

thee! Trust me to rest in peace with him and with his old protector. O my poor lovely son, why art thou so soon hated?

[ANGEL *stands centre*, MARY and JOSEPH *to his right and left*.]

ANGEL. Joseph be thou comforted, and thou benign mother of the Lord, there is the door, wherein ye entered with sorrow. Heaven be thy guide, for I wish to go.

MARY. Since thou wishest to go, Christ reward thee, he who hath lent thee to us.

[*Darkness.*]

SCENE XIII

[*Lights half up. HEROD raging centre. The ANGEL appears down left and speaks to him.*]

ANGEL. O thou false Herod, thou who pretendest peace and preparest war, this is the true God who desireth not to rule upon the earth. Thy thought goeth too far astray: thou canst not kill the child. That which thou considerest, O wicked king, thy thought concerning him shall fail.

[*Darkness. The choristers chant the Kyrie Eleison from the darkness.*]

PART III

APPENDIX

THE METHOD OF PRODUCTION

Austerity, sublimity, solemnity, simplicity—these are the abstract qualities which I shall stress again and again as essential to the proper effect of these plays. And the motive power behind the whole, to give the best results, must be sincerity. These plays are so humble that the state of mind of the producers of them shines through them as a candle light shines through tissue paper. And the professional spirit, unknown to early producers of these plays, vulgarizes them to insignificance. For the beauty of these plays must necessarily rest largely in the spirit behind them. Few of them have any great artistic merit. They are like the madonnas and what not of the early Florentine and Sienese schools of painting—crude and artless, but intensely sincere. This is decreasingly true of course of the later plays of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, among which must be counted the Coventry and Hessian plays, and for which somewhat different method of production is advisable than that outlined here. Suggestions for variations will be found in the plays themselves. But the whole movement died before it lost its sincerity completely. So it is that in revivals of them the amateur spirit is essential, the spirit that believes utterly in what it does and does it for the love of the doing.

This amateur spirit manifests itself in these plays primarily in reverence. The story which is being enacted is not just a beautiful legend. It is actual history of the Son of God incarnate, born of the virgin Mary, destined to suffer and be crucified for the sin of men and to sit at last in glory at the right hand of God the Father and on Doom's Day to deliver judgment upon the good and the wicked according to their deserts. If there be such a thing as reverence in man, this if anything calls it forth. And not the actors alone shall

feel this reverence, but all who are party to the performance, stage workers even as the girl who plays the rôle of Mary, if the audience is to be impressed by the great story and themselves depart revering.

I: SETTING

The ideal setting, the setting against which six of these plays have been acted, the setting which I have had in mind while adapting the others for modern use, is a cathedral background. The Romanesque hall of the Germanic Museum at Harvard is large enough to seat between one and two hundred people on temporary chairs; and at the end of this hall is one of those wonderfully stained plaster casts for which the museum should be famous, a replica of the Golden Gate of the Cathedral of Freiberg in Saxony (Frontispiece).

This cathedral entrance is approached by three shallow steps, thus giving two levels on which to act, a circumstance that greatly enhances pictorial effects. Approaches can be made from right and left on either the upper level, as it were from the cathedral interior, or the lower level, along the generous background of the façade.

The feeling of solemnity and sublimity, both so fundamentally essential to the success of a spectacle of this nature, is innate in the very background against which the Club have presented their plays.

Whatever the background used for a presentation of these plays, it should convey this feeling of solemnity and sublimity. Both the solemn and the sublime are by nature simple; and simplicity is thus perhaps the first characteristic for which to strive. Better a plain wood wall than anything ornate or involved; for there is in the starkest plainness somewhat of the sublime. If possible it is well to have in this background some single item that lends to the whole a feeling of loftiness as the high arch of the Freiberg gate in the Germanic Museum. As for the technical requisites, they are few: entrances of some sort from the right and left at both the back and front; the elevation of the back part of the action

area sufficiently far above the level of the front to place the central figures of a scene above the subordinate, and specifically to place the seated figure of Mary and the standing figures of Joseph and the Angels above the standing figures of the adoring shepherds and kings; and some area, invisible to the spectators, from which to light the whole;—that will suffice. A curtain is unnecessary, perhaps even undesirable, for the end of a scene may be indicated most simply and effectively by darkness. The drawing of a curtain between such short scenes as a miracle play is made up of, breaks the performance into fragments too sharply separated one from the other, and precipitates an element of crassness into the otherwise noble spectacle. Such little placing of properties as is necessary in the course of the action can easily, after a little practice, be done in the dark.

These plays were written to be acted in a church, or at least the earlier of them were; and all of them were performed under very primitive conditions of stage-craft. So the retention, in appearance at least, of this primitiveness is highly desirable in modern revivals. In many cases it will be necessary to retain this primitiveness in actuality as well. Hastily improvised places in churches or schools will be as satisfactory stages for the production of these old miracles as the most elaborate scenic effect that modern skill and resources can devise.

II: LIGHTING

The one factor of modern stage-craft that may with great effect be used to its capacity of intricateness is lighting. The shifting many-colored lighting so typical of vaudeville is of course to be avoided; but so long as the bounds of simplicity of effect are not overstepped, there need be no limit to the complicatedness of the mechanism that produces the effect. The Harvard Dramatic Club have achieved very satisfactory results by the use of spots arranged on standards, one on either side of the acting area, concealed from the audience, partly by protecting posts near the end of the Romanesque

hall, and partly by teasers erected screenwise on the bias alongside. These spots are worked by a portable switchboard at one side out of sight. The only disfigurement necessitated by this arrangement is the cables that run across the floor from the switchboard to the far spot standard; but even these are advantageous in that they serve as a boundary line otherwise nonexistent between the auditorium and the stage. The mediums used in these spots and the directions of the lights themselves are selected with an eye to the greatest variety in the smallest space, for it is impossible to change mediums during the performance. These spot standards afford all necessary light for the fore-stage and immediate back-stage. The further back-stage is lighted by lights run independently to the back from the switchboard, the light varying in nature according to the effect desired.

Such in brief is the method of lighting employed by the Club. It may not always be feasible to employ so elaborate a system, and again it may be desirable to use a more complicated mechanism. Of course it is possible to have no lighting other than a regular room-lighting and to ignore darkness and half-darkness effects entirely. But it would take extremely good costuming, a good setting, and acting so exactly right as to seem flawless to those watching the performance to distract attention from the boorishness and insipidity of the lighting. The best small outfit would include several spots, the number depending on the requisites of the play, something to rig the spots on, a rheostat to control the strength of light, and blue, straw, and amber mediums. The lights should be set beforehand for the whole performance, for under ordinary circumstances the spots would have to be out front of the stage area, and unapproachable while the audience was present. They should be operated from some single place, or if two or more control stations are unavoidable, an equal number of men are of course necessary to handle them.

Dimming or raising of the lights in the course of a scene is usually bad because it destroys the simplicity and archaism of the effect. One general exception is this: it is highly effective and in character with the spirit of these plays to bring

the lights up strong or to switch on a special powerful spot at the entrance of an angel. I do not doubt that the mediæval audiences of these plays supplied this heavenly brilliance in their own minds although the producers of the plays were unable actually to materialize it. There are several specific exceptions among these plays. In the Spanish play and again in the Umbrian play the scene where the Wisemen adore the Child begins in semi-darkness. The stable where the holy family sit about the manger is closed off at the beginning of the scene; and when the stable is opened to the Wisemen's view, the lights are brought up to heighten the effect of the manifestation of godhood. And in the last scene of the Hessian play I have added a long pantomime ending largely dependent for effect on the dimming and raising of lights.

III: COSTUMING

The most important factor in the production of these plays is of course the costuming. The attention of an audience viewing a dramatic spectacle is naturally centered upon the actors, and it is therefore imperative that the actors be attractive to the eye. I am by no means reneging when I suddenly start emphasizing depth and richness. For the infusion of warmth and color into these plays by the use of rich costumes makes them no less simple, solemn and sublime, and serves merely as a mellowing antidote to the austerity in the other provinces of production. After all the effect to be desired is not bare, but clothed, not poor, but rich; and it is the costumes that must be depended on to make a production the one rather than the other. The general specification then for the costuming in these plays would be richness without elaborateness, warmth of color without loudness, antiquity without bizarreness.

I am giving herewith a description of the costumes used by the Dramatic Club for the principal actors of these plays; also suggestions for the costumes of the other characters.

MARY. A red gown; a full blue mantle over head and shoulders flowing to the ground; a white veil and wimple about face and across forehead.

Mary appears in all the plays. In the Umbrian play, she will have to be clad without the veil and wimple and her head will have to be bound with a small cloth; for after the child is born, she takes a cloth from her head to bind him.

ELIZABETH. Gold dress; purple mantle over head and reaching to the floor; white veil and wimple.

Elizabeth appears only in the Towneley, Benediktbeuren, and Provençal plays.

OTHER WOMEN. In the Bilsen and Spanish plays two Midwives make their appearance. They should be costumed plainly, much after the fashion of Mary and Elizabeth; but probably the veil and wimple should be omitted altogether and the mantle shortened to a mere head-dress. The colors in their gowns should be very sober lest they detract from rather than emphasize the visual importance of Mary. In the Provençal play, one of the Midwives remains as Anastasia the daughter of the host; she should be costumed similarly to the Midwives, soberly, but with an effect of youthfulness. Rachel and the mothers of the Innocents in the Maastricht play present an opportunity for variety; full-skirted gowns and head-dresses would be good as a thematic basis to develop from.

JOSEPH. A long green gown; olive-gray drapery over shoulders; brown wig and beard. This should be changed to a gray wig and beard where, as in the Umbrian and Provençal plays, great point is made of the fact that Joseph is old.

Joseph is among the *Dramatis personae* of all the plays.

ZACHARY. Zachary appears only in the Provençal play. He should be costumed much as Joseph is, varying the component colors of his garb from those of Joseph's, and should have a gray wig and beard.

GABRIEL AND ANGELS. Gabriel and the other angels may be played by either men or women in many of the plays. The Club has used recently very simple costumes for them, a slip and over-drapery of either pink or yellow and a halo. Wings were found so hard to handle that they were omitted entirely. But where it is feasible, wings patterned after those worn by the angels in Fra Angelico's *Madonna dei Linaiuoli* would be effective and appropriate.

Gabriel appears in all but the Chantilly play. The Chantilly play has the annunciation of the Shepherds divided between two angels. The Hessian and Umbrian plays have scenes in which many angels appear for tableau effects. In the Umbrian play none of them speak; two speak in the Hessian play. In cases where, as in these two plays, many angels appear in a group, a rainbow effect could be produced by clothing the angels in different colors; this would greatly enrich and at the same time etherealize, so to speak, the angel scenes.

GOD, MERCY, JUSTICE, LADY CHURCH. These four difficult characters appear in the Maastricht play. How to costume allegorical figures convincingly is a problem for which I know no patent solution. Mercy and Justice should be clad with a rigid simplicity, I feel sure, and with a certain quality of sober richness. The figure of the Church on the other hand, I visualize as quite elaborately ornate but with an architectural angularity about her to give her the character of an animate mosaic. Even more difficult than any of the others is the figure of God. Moderns shrink from representing God. The best method would be to make him rather a voice than a person. The man impersonating God should be shrouded in black or gray, set on a throne in the centre back of the stage and veiled in a half darkness by lighting only the fore-stage directly. An intangibility could thus be achieved that is highly desirable. Or possibly God could speak from behind gauze so lighted as to conceal the actor and give the effect of God being the essence of light.

SHEPHERDS. 1. Knee-long pinkish gown; blue cape and hood; short breeches (not seen); feet bound in burlap. 2. Green skirt; short breeches; red cloak; burlap on feet. 3. Pink gown; short breeches; burlap on shoulders and bound on feet.—This general theme of costuming may be elaborated. Or an entirely new one, based on pictures such as Palma Vecchio's *Meeting of Jacob and Rachel*, which would be highly appropriate in the Umbrian play, may be evolved with effectiveness. The variations should all, however, be simple and rustic.

Only in the Spanish play do the shepherds have no part. In all the others but the Maastricht play there are at least

three shepherds; and in that play there are two. In the Hessian and Umbrian plays the exigencies of the stage impose the only limit on the number that might take supernumerary parts.

The Hessian play has also two characters who had best be garbed after the fashion of shepherds. They are Goatbeard, the servant of one of the shepherds, and Gayheart, Joseph's man. Goatbeard should certainly have a beard, probably gray. Gayheart I should conceive of as a young man in contrast to the elderly Joseph.

SHEPHERDESSES. The Chantilly play is unusual in that two Shepherdesses make their appearance. I have forgotten how the Dramatic Club costumed them and have no record of it; but they were clad in simple rustic attire constructed of combinations of coarse, colored fabrics, knee-long and somewhat blowsy.

In the Provençal play, Mary is attended by two hand-maidens. They might be clad more or less like shepherdesses; or perhaps better, they could wear simple long-skirted frocks of plain color or white set off with colored sashes. They should be so garbed in any case as to harmonize with Mary's attire, and yet act as a foil to it.

WISEMEN. 1. (Old). Blue gown with gold decoration; lemon yellow turban; blue cloak; tights; gray beard. **2.** (Young). Short orange gown; orange and gold turban; orange shoulder drape; red sash; tights; jewels on shoulders and elsewhere; black beard (crêpe). **3.** (Ethiopian). Long yellow gown; green shoulder decoration; yellow and gold turban sewn with jewels; jeweled belt; dark brown make-up.

The dominant note in the Wisemen's costumes should be richness and regality. The Ethiopian make-up is possible only where there is no specification of whence the Wisemen come. In the Bilsen play, for instance, where they claim Asia Minor, Arabia and Mesopotamia as their native lands, it is of course inappropriate.

The Wisemen are in all the plays but the Hessian and Provençal.

HEROD. Purple gown; purple and gold over-dress; purple

sateen cloak; red and purple turban with feather decoration; gold or jeweled belt; red beard.

Only the Provençal play does not count Herod in the cast.

PAGES, MESSENGERS, COURTIERS, etc. 1. Gold tunic; red tights; belt; shocky wig. 2. Green tunic with large orange sleeves; orange and red tights; red braid belt; dutch-cut wig. Here again great variety is possible, particularly in the manner of added richness. The general theme of close-fitting upper garment and tights, however, seems good.

The Announcer in the Chantilly play was doubled with the Messenger. The Announcer in the Hessian play might also well be costumed in a garb of this type. The Prologue of the Bilsen play, however, is spoken by "one dressed as a priest," by which a priest of the Catholic or Anglican churches is meant.

ARMORBEARER, PRINCES, etc. The Armorbearer appears in the Bilsen play; and soldiers appear in the Hessian, Maas-tricht, and Umbrian plays. They should be so clad as to give the effect of half or full armor and probably should carry shields as well as swords. Head-gear of any kind is unnecessary. Perhaps where there are several soldiers and they have the name of Prince or Knight, some of them might have a certain amount of richness and princeliness about them in the form of colored cloth or velvet, jewelry, and such. In the Spanish play, Herod's son appears in the garb of a soldier; and he should certainly be clothed with great regality, possibly even wear a crown, as well as bear a richly decorated sword and shield.

CITIZENS OF JERUSALEM. These unimportant personages can be garbed in simplifications of any of the other types of costuming with perfect appropriateness. They appear in the Umbrian play and are introduced to give body to crowds wherever they occur. The Envious One and Micah of the Provençal play may be relegated to this group for lack of a better place to put them; and the learned of Herod's court in the Spanish play may be after all largely of this group of colorless citizens of Jerusalem whose only duty is to em-

phasize and serve as a foil to the more important members of the cast.

HOST. One properly among these citizens of Jerusalem that rises out of his insignificance in the Hessian and Provençal plays is the Host of the Tavern. In the Hessian play there are two husbandmen to whom Joseph addresses himself in an effort to find lodgings. The one is portly and bluff, the other lean and fidgety. But I feel sure they both should be clad after the fashion of the Elizabethan innkeepers. The Host in the Provençal play is the portly one rather than the lean. He too should be a renaissance innkeeper, whether English, French, or German is inconsequential.

ISAIAH. Long blue robe; large lemon-colored head-dress that falls over the shoulders; black beard.

Isaiah appears in the Coventry, Benediktbeuren, Maas-tricht and Umbrian plays.

AARON. (Benediktbeuren play.) Red skirt; blue tunic; green cape tied as head-dress with red; black beard.

HIGH PRIEST. White gown; red mantle over back and shoulders; red brocade head-dress; gold mitre; beard; finger rings and jewels in plenty.

The High Priest appears in the Benediktbeuren, Spanish, Umbrian, and Provençal plays.

ST. AUGUSTINE. (Benediktbeuren play.) Blue gown; mitre and shoulder belt; mulberry hooded cape; white wig and beard.

These last four costumes may be used for many characters almost totally unrelated to the four for whom they were originally designed. They are the type of costume to be worn by any of the patriarchs and prophets. There are Priests in the Spanish and Umbrian plays. David appears in the Umbrian play. Virgil and Balaam come into the Maastricht play. And Abraham, Isaac, Levi, and Solomon are to be found in the Provençal mystery. These last are not really the patriarchs themselves, but Jews of the time of the Marriage of the Virgin. They may be dressed either in priestly or secular attire with equal propriety.

DEVILS. A single devil appears in the Benediktbeuren play. A band of them, at least six in number, take part in the Hes-

sian play. In the Benediktbeuren play the devil was clad in a black skin-tight outfit and remained in the shadow so as to make as subtle and insinuating an impression on the audience as possible. An entirely different impression is desired in the Hessian play. A predominance of red and black with touches of other colors in the costumes would be effective. As for the cut of the garments, close-fitting upper garments and tights, or a single garment cut to fit the body, decorated with tails and horns and dangly things, are probably most in keeping with the conception of the powers of darkness with which the writer of the play was acquainted.

At some time I should like to see a Christmas play given that attempted to transmute into life the rich, crude, austere and overpoweringly emotional pictures of the early Sienese and Florentine schools of painting: a background of gold, stationary figures with candles, immobile saints with their attributes, kneeling angels, rich, brocade-like, stiff-folding costumes, unearthly ascetic makeups—an intense reverent angularity. And again I should like to see a play given after the style of Benozzo Gozzoli's splendid *Visitation of the Magi* frescoes, warm and soft, yet archaic still. And finally I should like to see a play given with all the luxuriant reckless grandeur of Tintoretto, numberless somber, gorgeous, vital personages, filling a transformed classic stage with their regal breadth of movement in a limitless sweep of a wealth of creative power.

IV: PROPERTIES

The properties needed are few in number and relatively easy of acquisition. The manger should be plain wood, dark, standing on the floor, about two or two and a half feet deep, a foot wide at the bottom and six or eight inches wider at the top. The length is of comparatively little importance, but three feet is good. It should be filled with hay; and draping a sheet over it breaks the hardness of its lines. A doll, swaddled in white and with a gold halo is needed to represent the Christ-child. Where the child need not be revealed, a roll of cloth to suggest him might be better than a doll. The

doll would be most effective were it suggestive of Giotto's or Luca della Robbia's children, primitive rather than an attempt at realism. The shepherds should carry crooks, easily obtainable from any theatrical furnishing company. Joseph frequently carries a staff. The gifts that the Wise-men bear should be rich but unobtrusive. There should also be some sort of stool of indeterminate character for Mary to sit on in scenes such as the adoration of the kings and shepherds. These are all the properties that recur with regularity. Each play presents its own special demands. And I have listed the properties used in each.

Several of the more difficult individual needs may be mentioned here. In the Coventry play Herod has a throne; and in the Maastricht play it will probably be found best to seat God upon a throne also. Some high-seated but not too clumsy piece can be used. It should give the effect of solidity even if that effect is produced by the use of cloths. The Books of Prophecy used in the Bilsen and Spanish plays should be manuscript books either bound or rolled. The books of prophecy may most simply be represented by rolls of dark unfigured wallpaper rolled up from either end. One great advantage in this roll is that when dropped on the floor it rolls itself up again. The Umbrian play presents two problems, the ox and ass and the bendable fruit tree. The ox and ass are quite dispensable; but they are mentioned in the text and it would be better to have them appear. Beaver board silhouettes, painted, and set in a place not too brightly lighted, would be the simplest arrangement. The fruit tree will have to be made firm at the bottom and should be built on a supple stalk so as to bend easily. A few branches of leaves and a few apples should be wired onto this stalk so as to hang above the heads of Mary and Joseph as they stand near it. The one other problematic property is Joseph's rod in the Provençal play which flowers on the stage. This can be effected in several different ways. Joseph could carry a flowered rod concealed about him and by sleight of hand exchange the bare rod for the flowered. Or the rod might be in two parts, an inner and an outer, of which the outer was bare and the inner had blossoms attached to it; at the proper

moment, Joseph could put the inner rod out at the end of the outer rod with an unobtrusive motion, and so make it appear that the rod had bloomed. Or again the rod might have flowers bound down by a string which Joseph could release at the right time, thus freeing the blossoms. Or perhaps some other way might be devised more satisfactory yet.

The stage properties are so few and for the most part so simple that it is not at all difficult to manœuvre them silently in the dark. If, however, it is impossible to darken the stage, rather than use a curtain, it is better to leave the placing of the properties to the actors who appear in the scenes where they are used. For instance, let Joseph bear in the manger before the nativity scene and take it away after. If the spirit of the play is sufficiently sincere to get over at all, a little crudity of mechanics such as that will pass almost unnoticed and in no case elicit a laugh. But of course it is better to turn out all lights after each scene and have property men with nothing else to do than know where the properties are, arrange the stool and the manger and what not before the lights go up again.

V: ACTING

I have been emphasizing such abstract factors as austerity, sublimity, solemnity as of basic importance in the production of the plays. They are important for a modern appreciation of the plays. But it is to be seriously doubted if such abstract considerations ever entered the heads of the original writers and producers. I cannot doubt, however, that the mediæval audiences felt a divine strength back of these plays. The church and all factors connected with the church, religion if you will, was eternally uppermost in the minds of all throughout the Middle Ages. It was never necessary to emphasize religion; it was before, after, and in between all other occupations and considerations. So, even in sacred drama, it could be taken for granted. Whatever might be laid open to the ear and eye, the mind would always be conscious of the religious background and significance of the whole.

The modern mind on the other hand is predominantly occupied with things secular. Religion is used more as an oc-

casional tonic than as a background for all the acts of life. The modern man takes for granted the secularity of all things unless the religious aspect is repeatedly emphasized. The feeling of divine strength is not a factor *sine qua non* but must be built up carefully out of austerity, sublimity, solemnity. So if the accent seems to be changed from near-secularity to an over-emphasized religiousness, it is with the aim of producing approximately the same effect on a modern audience that these same plays produced on the mediæval audiences before whom they first were played. To be sure the later plays, the purely secular productions, everywhere lost their devotional character more and more and became increasingly nearer farce in such places as admitted of farcical treatment. The sixteenth century is a strikingly obscene century throughout Europe, and not even the religious drama of the period could escape the taint. But the plays in this volume are mostly of the earlier centuries, of the time when the motive of production was not yet entertainment but a sort of dramatic worship. And it is this type of play, dramatically quite well developed, but still devotionally undegenerate, that I wish to present to the modern public; and it is this effect of dramatic worship that I am striving to produce by the emphasis of austerity, sublimity and solemnity.

In the matter of acting too, then, I am going to emphasize austerity, sublimity, solemnity, simplicity. In fact, the actors need have no histrionic ability whatever to produce a highly satisfactory piece of work. A good smooth voice with some easy carrying power, and an ability to move restrainedly are the only real requisites for the miracle play actor. Every gesture made should be significant. Every step taken should be deliberate. Even haste should be expressed deliberately. All slipshod teetering and shuffling, all heterogeneous, hit-or-miss gesturing should be rigidly avoided. In speaking the actor should enunciate his words clearly and speak as slowly as the pace of the play and the emotion of the lines allow. He should however be quick to pick up his cues, no matter how slowly he may speak the line once he is started on it; for slowness on cues gives the effect rather of uncertainty

than of austerity. Elaborate voice-effects are not good. Professor Esther W. Bates of Boston University, who has made a lifetime study of these religious plays, writes in a recent letter: "I choose voices with richness of timbre, both in men and women, plangent voices as it were. I also seek voices whose natural pitch combines, say, in musical thirds and fifths. Occasionally during rehearsal I pitch and repitch these voices, sometimes with a tuning-fork, sometimes with the piano. So, although I have nothing like intoning, I get musical values. Then in the interpretation of the lines, I like as much sympathetic rendering as a person reading aloud might give, but no elocution. These two qualities of richness of timbre and sympathetic reading give an amazing poignancy to a text, while taking nothing from its dignity and austerity. Such a poignancy will hold an audience very closely, even through a long leisurely mystery."

These plays are anything but subtle and any introduction of subtlety or of complexity is out of character with the plays as a whole. Producing one characteristic at a time by such histrionic or vocal means as are at the command of any human being, here scorn, there anger, elsewhere love, is all the acting that these crude and primitive speeches will bear. This roughshod method of producing effects may be modified of course to some extent to fit the play. The more archaic, such as the Bilsen play, should be acted in more primitive fashion than such a one as the Towneley play or the Coventry pageant. Rigid simplicity of effect however will always in all the plays give the best results either in acting or in the stage mechanism of production.

I have been emphasizing the amateur spirit; but by that phrase I do not mean slipshodness. Everything that is done whether by the actors or by the production force should be done deliberately, convincingly, and surely. If an actor pauses in his speech, he should pause in such a way as to make perfectly clear to the audience that he does so because he wants a pause there, not because internally he is groping frantically for the next line. Everyone should know exactly what he is doing and why he is doing it; insofar the production of these plays should be professional.

VI: CHANTING

Though of course dispensable, the chants greatly add to the beauty and effectiveness of the plays. There is no surer way of producing a desired effect upon a group of people than by the use of appropriate music. A motion picture in itself, exciting perhaps at times, is rather cold and unstimulating. But a motion picture accompanied throughout by carefully selected music can sway the average audience nearly or quite as much as a well-acted spoken drama. These plays could never be without effectiveness if properly staged and acted. The use of the chants with them however will increase their emotional and exaltative value and round them off to a greater completeness.

Historically also the chants are appropriate. The Tropes out of which these plays grew were sung; and the liturgical dramas were sung from beginning to end, as the Benediktbeuren and Bilsen plays testify. And in most of the later plays chants were sung at what seemed to the mediæval mind appropriate places. The annunciation of the angels to the shepherds was preluded by the singing of the *Gloria in excelsis*; when the King of Saba presents his gift to the Child in the Chantilly play, the chorus is directed to sing *Omnes de Saba*; and the "three jolly Shepherds" accompany their journey to worship at the manger in the Coventry Pageant with the unchurchly "As I outrode."

The ancient church plain-song is what was used in the plays for the most part. This modal unmeasured music is of an exotic character, uncodifiable and austere. Further, it is bound up, and has been longer than can be remembered, with religious rites. It may in fact go back even to the days of the psalmist David. For all these reasons it is desirable head and shoulders above any other available music where one is striving for an awesome and exalting effect. So in all the plays, with a single exception, this music has been specified for use. And because it may be difficult of acquisition, I have included at the end of the book, transcriptions of all the chants so specified.

The chants should be sung in unison by male voices only. This is the general rule. In one or two cases, I have specified that female voices should join in, always however in unison. This is contrary to the puristic use of the chant and is done only for special effects. The way in which the chants should be rendered is expressed feelingly and accurately, if a bit profusely, by Edward F. Rimbault in his *Cathedral Chants of the XVI, XVII, and XVIII Centuries* (London 1844): "The *fault* especially to be avoided in Chanting, says a late reverend Divine, is *hurry*. Even the monotonous words allotted to the recitation note, how many soever they may be, are not to be mingled together in confused rapidity, or sung at all quicker than the words belonging to any other note of the Chant. Such a practice is very displeasing and dissonant; and what is more, is highly irreverent. Every syllable should be distinctly and deliberately articulated; and, as far as possible, the emphasis given as it would be by a correct speaker or reader.

"The *excellence* constantly and above all things to be aimed at in Chanting, is *to be in earnest—devoutly* in earnest; to sing, not as a mere exercise of skill or opportunity of display, but as an act of holy worship and service; to 'sing with the spirit,' and to 'lift up the heart' with the voice, 'unto God in the heavens.'" Indeed being "devoutly in earnest" in everything related to a Miracle Play, even to the manipulation of properties, is the only sure way of achieving the best results.

The one piece of music not of this character is the song *As I out Rode* used in the Coventry Pageant. This song is rather of the folk-song type, balladic rather than churchly, and is written for three parts, treble, tenor, and bass. It is called for in the original text of the Pageant and the words and music are reprinted by Thomas Sharp in his *Dissertation on the Pageants or Dramatic Mysteries anciently performed at Coventry*, Coventry, 1825. In this reprint the three parts are given separately and I cannot guarantee that I have set them together again in the original relationship. The rules for the singing of plain-song do not of course apply to this piece.

The chanting should be done by a fair-sized group of men from some relatively remote place from the stage. They should be far enough away so that they could sing out full and yet not drown the words spoken on the stage. Of course the size of the choir can be cut down or they can sing studiously *piano*. But I feel that the effect would be better if the loudness were regulated rather by distance than by deliberate effort on the part of the choristers. In the Hessian play, where I have juggled chants to my heart's content, I have specified that two scenes should be accompanied by chanting "dimly as from a distance." The best effect could be achieved by having the choir singing fairly near and full, but behind closed doors, thus giving the effect of loud singing at a distance. Any other arrangement would sound thin and near by, rather as of one or two of the heavenly choir at the gates of hell than as of the whole choir singing so loud in their own abode as to be heard even in the realms of Lucifer.

NOTES ON THE PLAYS

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I: THE COVENTRY PLAY

The Pageant of the Shearman and the Tailors is one of two known plays of a late Coventry cycle. The manuscript of this pageant, made by one "Robart Croo" and "fenysschid in the yere of owre lorde god MCCCCC & xxxiiijth," was destroyed in the burning of the Free Reference Library at Birmingham in 1879 and is known now only in transcripts. The standard reprint is Hardin Craig's edition of the two Coventry pageants, entitled *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, London, 1902, and included as number 87 in the Extra Series of the Publications of the Early English Text Society. There are a number of other reprints of the play of which the most generally accessible is J. M. Manly, *Specimens of the Pre-Shakesperian Drama*, Boston et al. (1897), volume I, pp. 120-152.

II: THE TOWNELEY PLAY

This Towneley Play is made up of several scenes cut and rearranged from plays 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15 of the Towneley or Wakefield cycle, written, according to the editors of the standard edition, between 1360 and 1410. Also, a part of the fourteenth play of the York cycle and a few lines, greatly changed, from the thirteenth play of the *Ludus Coventriae*, or N-Town cycle, are included. The specifications for chants are mine.

The Early English Text Society reprint is *The Towneley Plays*, edited by G. England and A. W. Pollard, London, 1897, and is number 71 in the Extra Series of the Society's publications. Play number 13 of the cycle, the famous Second Shepherd's Play, may also be found separate in J. M.

Manly's *Specimens of the Pre-Shakesperian Drama*, volume I, pp. 94-119, and elsewhere. The York cycle is edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith, *York Plays*, Oxford, 1885. The latest edition of the *Ludus Coventriae* is that edited by K. S. Block and published as number 120 in the Extra Series of the Early English Text Society, London, 1922.

III: THE CHANTILLY PLAY

The Chantilly Play, now preserved in the Library of Chantilly, is shown by the editor to come from the north. The manuscript, he has proved, was written at Huy by a nun, one Katherine Bourlet, presumably during her novitiate, in the second half of the fifteenth century. The text he attributes to the late thirteenth or possibly the early fourteenth century; and linguistic peculiarities lead him to set the vicinity of Liège as its place of origin.

The play is written in irregular lines with assonance instead of rime. Necessary stage directions are to be found in the original; but a few more have been added in the translation. The chants are specified in the original with one exception. *Puer natus est* is here substituted for *Glorieux Dieu qui fist*.

The play is reprinted by Gustave Cohen, *Mystères et Moralités du Manuscrit 617 de Chantilly*, Paris, 1920, pp. 3-23.

IV: THE BENEDIKTBEUREN PLAY

This acting version of the Benediktbeuren play, made with ease of performance as perhaps the first object, omits or condenses, for one reason or another, some of the most characteristic portions. One of these is the prophet play that precedes the main play. The epilogue in Egypt is omitted entirely, both because it was written by a later hand and because it is anticlimactic and undramatic. Other cuts are made as well, always with the aim of simplification and dramatic betterment.

The play is found in an early thirteenth century manuscript, the collection of the *Carmina Burana* used in the Upper-Bavarian abbey of Benediktbeuren. It occupies the folio pages 99 to 106, and was apparently written to be sung, for it is throughout accompanied with a running musical notation. It is written in Latin. The prophet play and the nativity play are, with a few exceptions, written partly in antiphons and direct quotations from the Vulgate, partly in eight-line stanzas of catalectic trochaic tetrameter lines, the second, fourth, sixth and eighth lines riming together. The rime-lines are occasionally trochaic trimeters.

The text of the Benediktbeuren play is given by Froning in *Das Drama des Mittelalters*, Part III, Stuttgart (1892), Volume 14 of the *Deutsche Nationallitteratur*, pp. 877-901.

V: THE SPANISH PLAY

The Spanish Play is one of the very few plays of this type that we have from Spain; possibly the only Christmas Play of any considerable length. Authorities ascribe it to the middle of the twelfth century.

The play is written in a tetrametrical verse riming in couplets. Only 147 lines are known. There are no rubrics whatever; and the text itself, as may be seen by examining the rime-lines, is not without gaps. Gottfried Baist has published a semi-facsimile of the fragment, *Das altspanische Dreikoenigspiel*, Erlangen, 1887. In revising the play, I have not hesitated to interpolate material where there seemed to be a gap in the text.

—*Nor hath it been in our mouths.* (p. 106)

This is where the Spanish fragment breaks off. From here on the play is my reconstruction. For the most part I have followed the Bilsen play, elaborating freely. Motifs from the Chantilly play, the Orléans play, and the Umbrian play, and material from other sources are incorporated.

The best edition is that of R. Menendez Pidal in the *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, Madrid, 1900, which is reprinted by J. D. M. Ford in his *Old Spanish Readings*, Boston *et al.*, 1906, pages 6-12. It is also edited by

K. A. M. Hartmann, *Ueber das altspanische Dreikönigsspiel*, Bautzen, 1879.

VI: THE PROVENÇAL PLAY

This play is found in two manuscripts, of which only one, so far as I know, is available in reprint. The "*manuscrit de la Colombine*" as it is called, is unavailable; the available manuscript is in the Libri Collection in Florence.

The editor writes that this mystery belongs to Provence, properly so called, probably dating from the end of the 13th century or the first years of the fourteenth. The play is written in iambic tetrameter rimed couplets; the epilogic speech of the angel Gabriel however is in pentameters. There are no stage directions beyond the rubrics that indicate who speaks.

Between the marriage scene and the visitation scene there is a gap of about a hundred and thirty lines which I have attempted to fill. I have acted on the assumption that the material that has here fallen out consists of the last part of the marriage, the whole of the annunciation, and the first part of the visitation scene; and that there is probably nothing else. Beyond this one large patch and one or two minor patches and omissions, I have not tampered with the text, albeit the translation is a very free one. The pageantry is however all added. One name I have changed. Micah appears in the original as Salutatz.

The play may be found edited by Paul Meyer in *Romania*, Volume 14, Paris, 1885, pp. 496-519.

VII: THE HESSIAN PLAY

I have taken more liberties with the Hessian play than with any of the others. To use the term in the sense in which Goethe used it, I have tried to stylize the play. Instead of making a literal parody of it, I have tried to develop the potentialities that lay more or less inert, buried under layers of local and contemporary froth. So it is that I have taken

my cue from the responsive speeches of Mary and Joseph: "Joseph, my dear cousin, help me to comfort the child," etc., and have developed out of scattered material a nativity scene that is bound together and balanced with a greater completeness than in the original. So it is that I have taken almost illegitimate liberties with the devil scene to bring out the value that is hinted at by its position in the German. It may be that the inclusion of the ruthlessly cut scene from the Erlau play (scene viii) is going too far. My only hope is that the spectacle value of the revised version is excuse enough for the liberties I have taken.

But I have followed the original in outline and in tone if not in detail. Besides free cutting, the one major change is the inclusion of the extraneous Herod scene. The scene division is mine. The stage directions are chiefly my interpolation. And though chants are used freely in the original, the use of chants here is my own.

The play is found in a late fifteenth century manuscript. It is written in a dialect that vacillates back and forth from high German to low German forms, and which commentators have determined originally at least to have been Hessian. The verse form is a kind of erratic couplet, very frequently with an imperfect rime.

The text that I have used of the Hessian play is that given by Richard Froning, *Das Drama des Mittelalters*, part III, volume 14 of the *Deutsche Nationallitteratur*, Stuttgart (1892), pages 904-937. The text of the Erlau play is in the same volume, pages 940-952.

VIII: THE MAASTRICHT

This play is adapted from the Maastricht "*Paachspel*," so called, a play presenting, sketchily no doubt, the history of the world from the creation presumably through to the day of judgment, though the only known manuscript breaks off before the crucifixion. Lines 96-551, taken as a unit, comprise a Christmas play, and this version is a translation, with a few minor omissions, of those lines.

The play, attributed by its editor to the early middle of the fourteenth century, is written in that irregular trochaic tetrametrical quasitrimetrical verse with couplet rime that was used so widely in Germany during the Middle Ages, especially in the court epics. It is in a language that oscillates back and forth between Low and High German forms. The stage directions are of the meagerest, merely indicating who speaks with an entrance or exit occasionally designated. Biblical texts are indicated in Latin before the Dutch paraphrases throughout the play. There is no scene division. There are no chants specified.

The play is to be found in reprint in Haupt's *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, Volume II, Leipzig, 1842, pages 302-350, and is edited by Julius Zacher.

IX: THE BILSEN PLAY

The text of the Bilsen Play, the editor writes, "is found in an *Evangeliarium* of the eleventh century from Bilsen, now preserved, without press-mark, in the library of the Bollandists in Brussels. . . . The hand that wrote the dramatic text may be assigned to the end of the eleventh century. The text is furnished with musical notation in the form of neums. . . ."

The play is written in Latin and much of the text and many of the rubrics are in Leonine hexameters. There is no scene division in the original text. Scene I is different from the opening scene of the original. What is here attributed to the Priest is there sung by a "gaily-dressed band of boys . . . singing in a clear voice but not in unison." A fragmentary scene at the end of the play has been omitted; and a few minor changes made in the body of the play itself.

The best reprint of the text of the Bilsen play is that of Karl Young and Gustave Cohen in *Romania*, volume 44, Paris, 1915-17, pages 357-372.

X: THE UMBRIAN PLAY

This is made up of three distinct lauds of the *Disciplinati* of Umbria. They are all three to be found in two different ancient Umbrian manuscripts, the *manoscritto Vallicelliano* and the *manoscritto Perugino*. The readings differ between the two manuscripts somewhat, but as the Perugian is certainly the older, it has seemed wise to follow that manuscript in preference to the other. The Perugian script dates from the early middle of the fourteenth century; the lauds may be older.

All three lauds are written chiefly in an eight-line stanza of feminine iambic lines, alternately trimeters and pentameters, with the rime scheme a b a b b c c d, the d-rime being theoretically the same throughout the three lauds. Occasionally a four-line stanza is used, and in the latter part of the third laud, the stanza form breaks down. The dialect is Umbrian. The stage directions, such as they are, are in Latin. For the most part stage directions and all the specifications for chants in the acting version are my own.

I have followed the text given in Giuseppe Galli's *Laudi inedite dei Disciplinati Umbri*, Bergamo, 1919, pp. 3-24. The first laud, as in the Vallicellian manuscript, may be found in F. Toraca *Teatro Italiano dei Secoli XIII, XIV, XV*, Firenze, 1885, pp. 20-36; and E. Monaci *Appunti per la Storia del Teatro Italiano*, Imola, 1874, pp. 47-52.

THE CHANTS

These chants, transcribed by various people from various sources, are not here all in the form used by the church today. I myself transcribed the *Hodie Christus natus est*; and I deliberately took an old form in preference to the present one because it appealed to me more. The others are the versions used by the Club in the past.

It will be found that most of the chants have an asterisk

near the beginning. This indicates that up to the point so marked the singing is done by one man only, the so-called *Cantor*, the chorus joining in at the point designated by the asterisk. The *Magnificat* and *Kyrie* are customarily sung by answering choruses. The last *elcison* of the *Kyrie* is sung by the two choruses together. This technicality may well be ignored in the use of the chants here. The *Pange Lingua* and *Creator* are ancient hymns, and are sung by the entire choir without a *Cantor*. The words of the former are by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274); the latter is an Ambrosian hymn, but probably not by Ambrose himself. They may be found in Daniel's *Thesaurus Hymnologicus*, Leipzig, 1855, Volume I, pp. 251 and 74 respectively. The words and music of *As I Out Rode* are in Thomas Sharp's *Dissertation on the Pageants or Dramatic Mysteries anciently performed at Coventry*, Coventry, 1825, pp. 113 ff.

THE CHANTS

THE CHANTS

I. GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Glo - ri - a in ex-cel-sis De - o et in ter-ra pax

ho - mi - ni-bus bo-nae vo-lun-ta-tis Lau-da - mus te

Be - ne - di - ci - mus te A - do - ra - mus te Glo-ri - fi -

ca - mus te Gra-ti - as a - gi - mus ti -

bi prop-ter ma-gnam glo-ri - am tu - am Do-mi-ne De -

us Rex cae-les-tis De - us Pa - - ter o - mni -

po-tens Do-mi-ne Fi - li u - ni - ge - ni - te Ie - su

Chri - - ste Do-mi-ne De-us A - gnus De - i

Fi - li - us Pa - - tris Qui tol-lis pec-ca - ta mun-

di mi-se-re-re no-bis Qui tol-lis pec-ca-ta mun-

di su-sci-pe de-pre-ca-ti-o-nem nos-tram Qui se -

des ad dex-te-ram Pa-tris mi-se-re-re no-bis Quo-ni -

am tu so-lus sanctus tu so-lus Do-mi-nus Tu so -

lus Al-tis-si-mus Ie - su Chri - - ste Cum

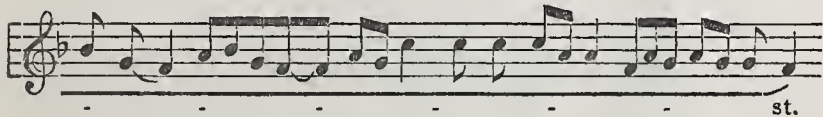
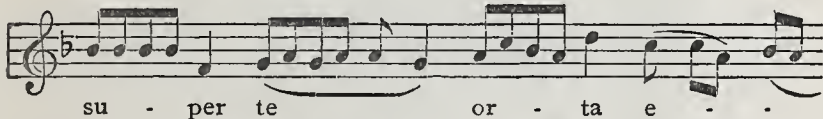
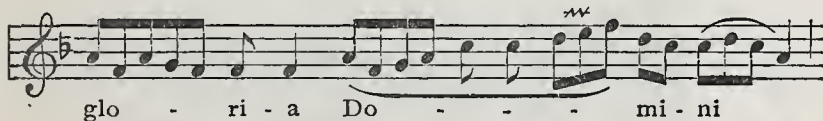
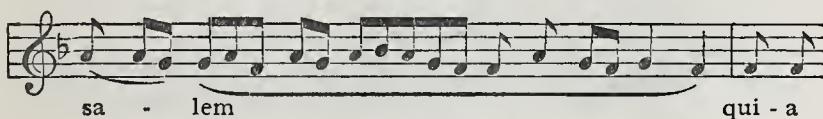
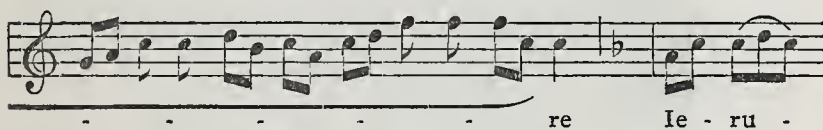
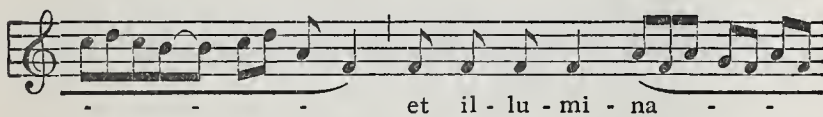
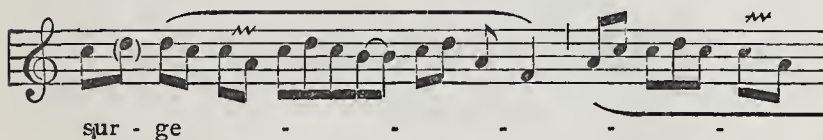
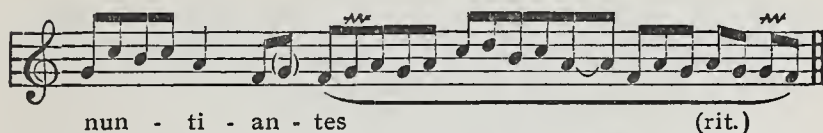
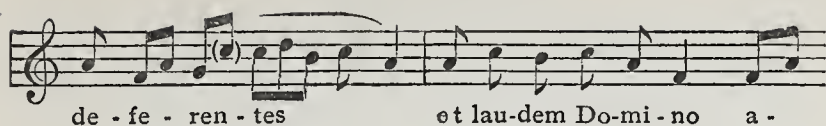
sanc - to spi - - ri - - tu in glo - ri -

a De - i Pa - - tris. A - - - men.

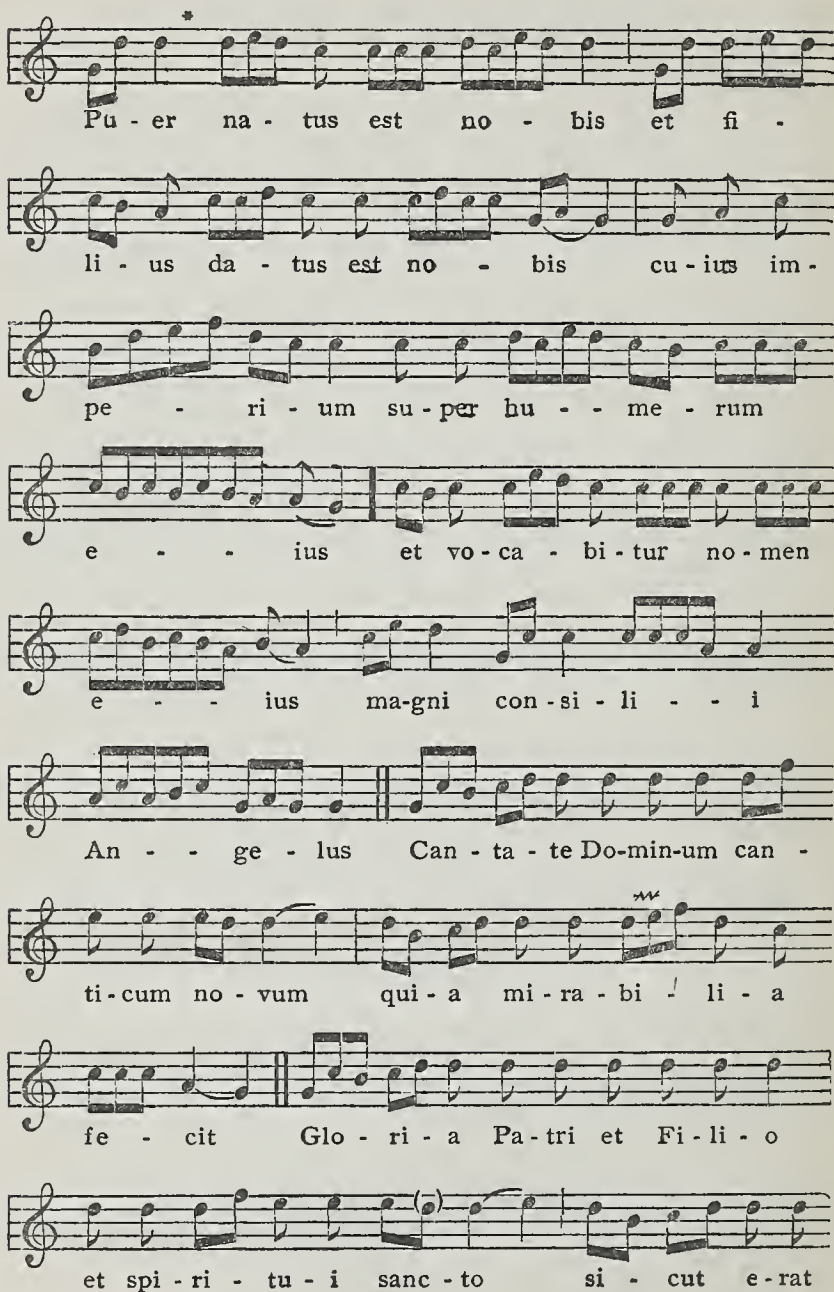
II. OMNES DE SABA

O - - mnes de Sa - ba

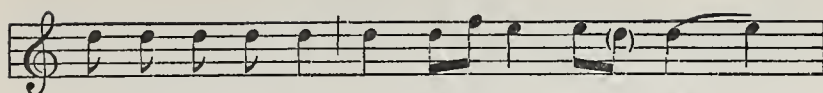
ve - ni - ent au - - rum et thus



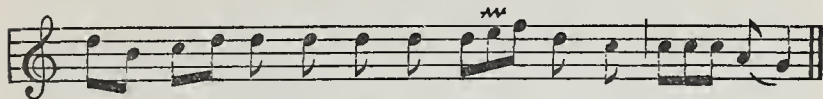
III. PUER NATUS EST NOBIS


 The musical notation is written on a single staff in G-clef (treble clef) with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. A small asterisk (*) is placed above the first measure. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the notes.

Pu - er na - tus est no - bis et fi -
 li - us da - tus est no - bis cu - ius im -
 pe - ri - um su - per hu - - me - rum
 e - - ius et vo - ca - bi - tur no - men
 e - - ius ma - gni con - si - li - - i
 An - - ge - lus Can - ta - te Do - min - um can -
 ti - cum no - vum qui - a mi - ra - bi - li - a
 fe - cit Glo - ri - a Pa - tri et Fi - li - o
 et spi - ri - tu - i sanc - to si - cut e - rat

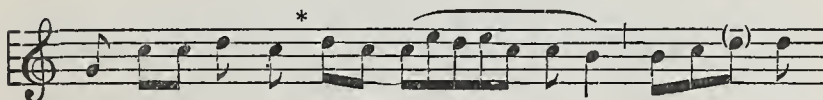


in prin-ci - pi - o et nunc et sem - per

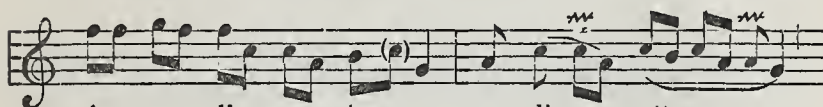


et in sae-cu - la sae-cu - lo-rum A - men.

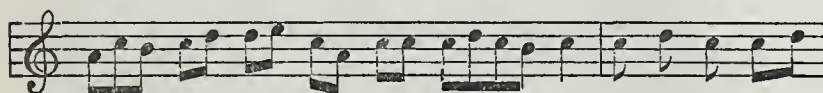
IV. ADORATE DEUM



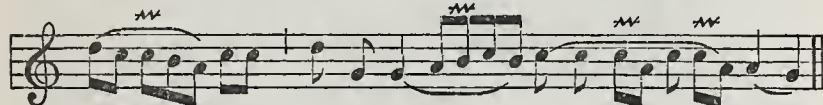
A - do - ra - te De - um o - mnes



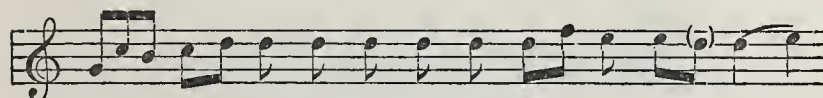
An - ge - li e - ius. au - di - vit



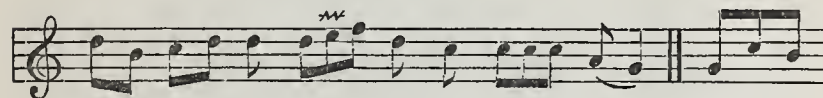
et lae - ta - ta est Si - on et ex - sul - ta -



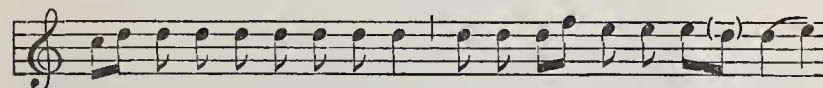
ve - - runt fi - li - ae Iu - - dae.



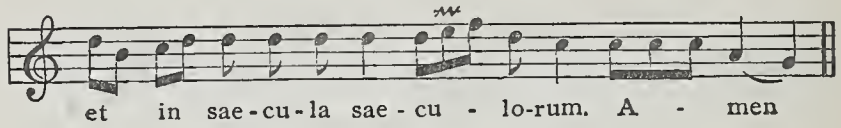
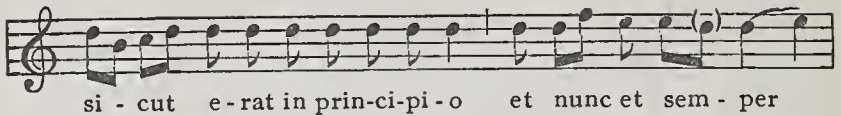
Do - mi - nus reg - na - vit ex - sul - tet ter - ra



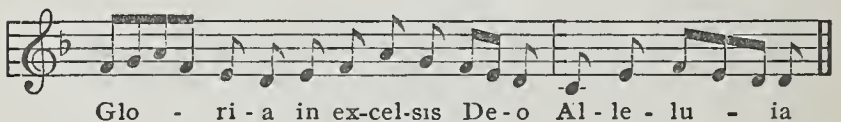
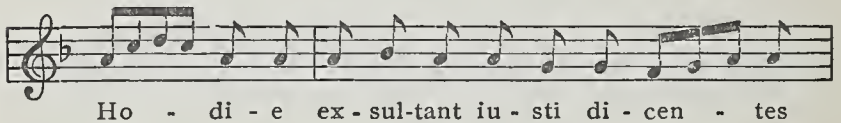
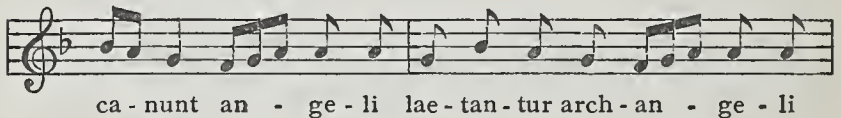
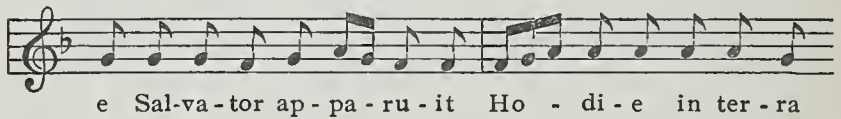
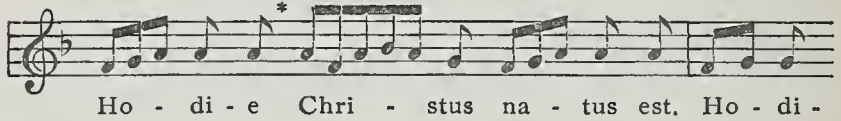
lae - ten - tur in - su - lae mul - tae Glo -



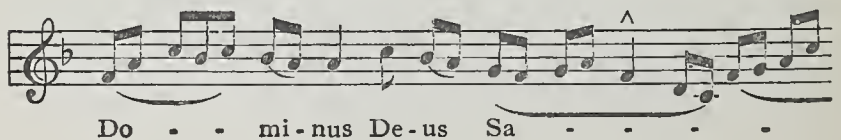
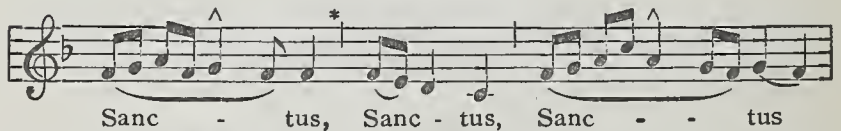
ri - a Pa - tri et Fi - li - o et spi - ri - tu - i sanc - to

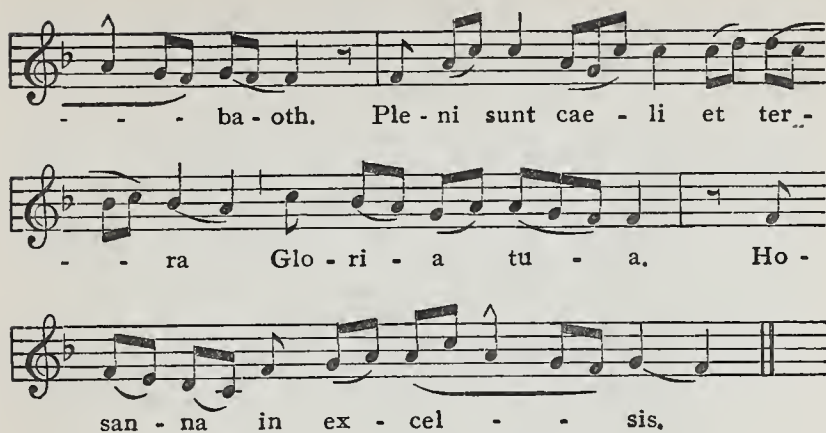


V. HODIE CHRISTUS NATUS EST



VI. SANCTUS





VII. MAGNIFICAT

Ma - gni - fi - cat an - i - ma me - a do - mi - num
 Et ex - sul - ta - vit spi - ri - tus me - us:
 in Deo salu - ta - ri me - o Qui - a respexit humilitatem
 an - cil - lae su - ae: ecce enim ex hoc beatem me dicent omnes
 ge - ne - ra - ti - ones. Qui - a fecit mihi ma - gna
 qui po - tens est et sanc - tum no - men ei - us -

VIII. KYRIE ELEISON

Ky - ri - e - - (e) - - - e - - -

- - le - i - son, Ky - ri - e - - - - -

- - e - - - le - i - son, Ky - ri - e - -

- - - - - e - - - le - i - son,

Christe - - - - - e - - - le -

i - son, Christe - - - - - e - - -

- - le - i - son, Christe - - - - -

e - - - le - i - son, Ky - ri - e - - - - -

e - - - le - i - son Ky - ri .

e - - - e - - - le - i -

son. Ky - ri - e - - -

e - - - le - i - son.

IX. CREATOR ALME SIDERUM

Cre - a - tor al - me si - de - rum Ae - ter - na lux cre - den - ti - um

Je - su re - demp - tor om - ni - um In - ten - de vo - tis sup - pli - cum.

Creator alme siderum,
 Aeterna lux credentium,
 Iesu redemptor omnium
 Intende votis supplicum.

Qui daemonis ne fraudibus
 Peririt orbis, impetu
 Amoris actus, languidi
 Mundis medela factus es.

THE CHANTS

Commune qui mundi nefas
 Ut expiaries, ad crucem
 E virginis sacrario
 Intacta prodīs victima.

Cuius potestas gloriae,
 Nomenque cum primum sonat;
 Et coelites et inferi
 Tremēte curvantur genu.

Te deprecamur ultimae
 Magnum diei iudicem:
 Armis supernae gratiae
 Defende nos ab hostibus.

Virtus, honor, laus, gloria
 Deo Patri, cum Filio,
 Sanctum simul Paraclito,
 In saeculorum saecula.

X. PANGE LINGUA

Pan-ge lin - gua glo - ri - o - si Cor-po - ris my-ster -
 i - um San-guin-is-que prae-ti - o - si Quem in
 mun-di prae-ti - um Fruc-tus ven - tri ge -
 ne - ro - si Rex ef - fu - dit gen - ti - um,

Pange, lingua, gloriosi
Corporis mysterium,
Sanguinisque pretiosi,
Quem in mundi pretium
Fructus ventris generosi,
Rex effudit gentium.

Nobis natus, nobis datus,
Ex intacta virgine
Et in mundo conversatus,
Sparso verbi semine,
Sui moras incolatus
Miro clausit ordine.

In supremæ nocte coenæ,
Recumbens cum fratribus,
Observata lege plene
Cibis in legalibus
Cibum turbae duodenæ
Se dat suis manibus.

Verbum caro, panem verum
Verbo carnem efficit,
Fitque sanguis Christi merum;
Etsi sensus deficit,
Ad firmandum cor sincerum
Sola fides sufficit.

Tantum ergo sacramentum
Veneremur cernui:
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui:
Praestat fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui!

Genitori, Genitoque
 Laus et iubilatio!
 Salus, honor, virtus quoque
 Sit et benedictio!
 Procedenti ab utroque
 Compar sit laudatio!

XI. AS I OUT RODE

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of two systems, each with three staves. The first system contains the lyrics 'As I out rode this end'res night, Of' repeated on each staff. The second system contains the lyrics 'three jol - ly shep - herds I saw a' on the first staff, 'three jol - ly shep - herds I saw a sight, I' on the second staff, and 'three jol - ly shep - herds I saw a' on the third staff. The melody is primarily in the treble clef, with the bass clef providing a harmonic accompaniment.

As I out rode this end'res night, Of

As I out rode this end'res night, Of

As I out rode this end'res night, Of

three jol - ly shep - herds I saw a

three jol - ly shep - herds I saw a sight, I

three jol - ly shep - herds I saw a

sight. And all a-bout their fold a star shone

saw a sight. And all a-bout their fold a star shone bright,a

sight. And all a-bout their fold a star shone

Detailed description: This system contains three staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It begins with a whole note, followed by a double bar line, then a series of eighth and quarter notes. The middle staff is in bass clef and contains a continuous line of eighth notes. The bottom staff is also in bass clef and contains a series of quarter and eighth notes.

bright. They sang ter - li ter - low. They

star shone bright. They sang ter - li ter - low. They

bright. They sang ter - li ter - low. They

Detailed description: This system contains three staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It starts with a whole note, followed by a double bar line, then eighth and quarter notes. The middle staff is in bass clef with eighth notes. The bottom staff is in bass clef with eighth notes and includes a slur over the first few notes.

sang ter - li ter - low. So

sang ter - li ter - low. So mer-ri - ly the shep-herds their

sang ter - li ter - low. So mer-ri - ly the shep-herds their

Detailed description: This system contains three staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It features a series of quarter notes, followed by a double bar line, then a whole rest and a half note. The middle staff is in bass clef with eighth notes. The bottom staff is in bass clef with eighth notes.

THE CHANTS

mer - ri - ly the shep-herds their pipes can blow, their
 pipes can blow. So mer - ri - ly the shep-herds their
 pipes can blow, their pipes can blow.

pipes can blow. So mer - ri - ly the shep - -
 pipes can blow. So mer - ri - ly the shep-herds their
 So

herds, so mer - ri - ly the shep-herds their
 pipes can blow, their pipes can
 mer - ri - ly the shepherds their pipes can blow, their

pipes can blow, their pipes can blow.

blow.

pipes can blow.

As I out rode this enderes night
 Of three jolly shepherds I saw a sight,
 And all about their fold a star shone bright
 They sang terli terlow
 So merrily the shepherds their pipes can blow.

Down from heaven, from heaven so high
 Of angels there came a great company
 With mirth and joy and great solemnity
 They sang terli terlow
 So merrily the shepherds their pipes can blow.

PROPERTIES USED IN
VARIOUS PLAYS

PROPERTIES USED IN VARIOUS PLAYS

PROPERTIES USED IN

THE PAGEANT OF THE SHEARMEN AND THE TAILORS, p. 5

Bell
Crooks for Shepherds
Shepherd's lunch
Doll to represent Christ-child
Gifts of Shepherds: pipe, hat, mittens
Herod's throne
Gold, frankincense and myrrh
Stool for Mary

PROPERTIES USED IN

THE TOWNELEY PLAY, p. 33

Staff for Joseph
Gold, frankincense and myrrh
Doll to represent Christ-child
Shepherds' gifts: cherries, bird, ball
Shepherds' crooks
Stool for Mary

PROPERTIES USED IN

THE NATIVITY, p. 71

Manger with hay and sheet		
Doll for Christ-child		
Gold, frankincense and myrrh		
Lamb	}	for Shepherds
Basket of nuts and apples		
Flute		
Shepherds' crooks		
Table with four goblets		
Stool for Mary		

PROPERTIES

PROPERTIES USED IN
THE BENEDIKTBEUREN PLAY, p. 89

Manger, hay, sheet.
Doll to represent Christ-child
Gold, frankincense and myrrh
Shepherds' gifts: lamb, basket of fruit and small blanket
Aaron's rod
Three crooks for Shepherds
Stool for Mary

PROPERTIES USED IN
THE WISEMEN, p. 101

Gifts of the Wisemen
Books of Prophecy
Doll to represent Christ-child
Staff for Joseph
Stool for Mary

PROPERTIES USED IN
THE PROVENÇAL PLAY, p. 113

Rods
Shepherds' crooks
Doll to represent Christ-child
Stool for Mary
Shepherds' offerings
Food for Mary

PROPERTIES USED IN
THE HESSIAN PLAY, p. 133

Staff for Joseph
Manger with hay and sheet
Crooks for Shepherds
Swords for Princes
Doll to represent Christ-child
Stool for Mary

PROPERTIES USED IN
THE MAASTRICHT PLAY, p. 151

Crooks for Shepherds
Swords for Knights of Herod
The Gifts of the Wiseman
Manger with hay and sheet
Dolls to represent the Christ-child and the Innocents
Stool for Mary

PROPERTIES USED IN
THE STAR, p. 165

Manger with hay and sheet
Swords for Herod and his men
Books of Prophecy
Staves for Wisemen and Joseph
Crooks for Shepherds
Herod's gifts to the Kings
Doll to represent Christ-child
Gold, frankincense and myrrh
Stool for Mary

PROPERTIES USED IN
THE UMBRIAN PLAY, p. 177

Lanterns for Shepherds
Crooks for Shepherds
Staff for Joseph
Cloth to bind the child
Cloths brought by Shepherds to bind the child
Gold, frankincense and myrrh
Tree of fruit
Manger
Images of ox and ass
Doll to represent Christ-child
Stool for Mary

